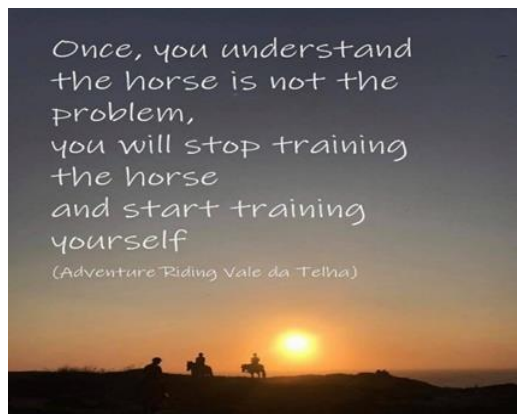


## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP, CONNECTION & PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR HORSE



**Horsemanship is training the human, not the horse**

**Food for thought!**



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## **HOW TO ACCESS ARTICLES ON THESE SUBJECTS**

If you can read **French**, there are more than 60 articles addressing these concepts on

**Lynelaforme.coach/blog/** articles on **Confidence building, Partnership, Communication, Giving our horse responsibilities** etc.

or

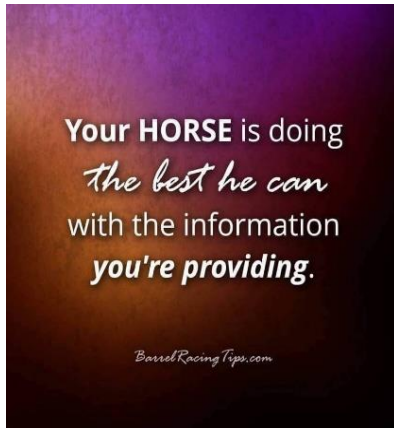
**Formationequestreenligne.com** has the Powerpoint format of the majority of those articles plus a long text on **trail riding** (La randonnée équestre: une discipline qui se prépare) as well as this one in English on Horsemanship.

The documents are all **FREE** except the one on **Confidence building** which is the resume of 16 articles of the blog in 455 slides and sold 25\$.

When entering the site, go to the upper right and write my name in the magnifying glass and you will have access to **all** the documents.

You can also access all the free documents **except the one on Confidence** when you enter FORMATIONS and go to **formations gratuites**.

## Introduction



### **Horsemanship is educating people educate their horses!**

The 3 ‘L’s’ of horsemanship by Fawn Anderson, Devanee Cardinal, Farrah Green, Lyne Laforme, Pat Parelli, Lindsey Partridge, Pete Rodda, Jerry Williams.

**LOVE:** the heart connection, that is not the hard part to do but we must be careful as too much love without proper education can make for a somewhat unrespectful horse pushing their human like a puppet as well as an unrespectful human smothering their horse with hugs and kisses which might not be that appreciated by the horse. |

Commenté [D1]:

**LANGUAGE:** communication with our body language, using our energy (chi) as well as our drive lines, educating ourselves to have a light horse, **ZERO BRACE** and to communicate with the touch (porcupine), the ‘‘ bubble’’ (confidence and influence bubbles) for the **DRIVE** as well as the **DRAW**.

**Zero brace** means a horse that never pulls on the lead, never has a tight straight line on the lead between the hand and the horse; it is all about **SOFTNESS**. The horse follows a ‘‘FEEL’’ that is, keeps a **FLOAT IN THE ROPE**. Be careful as a horse that pushes into you is not holding a float in the rope even though there is no tension in the lead line.

To ‘‘follow a feel’’ on the lead brings softness thus helps to have lightness in the ride.

**LEADERSHIP** develops partnership & increases connection with the leader, thus helping the horse develop his confidence. Horses are natural followers and they like to have a good leader. The **emotional and mental development of a horse is very often somewhat overlooked** as we tend to eliminate and avoid stimuli instead of dealing with them. We too often do not take every opportunity to expose our horse with the strategies such as leadership, partnership and confidence building concepts such as: synchronicity, sentinel, use of patterns: the ones to keep, the ones to change, comfort/effort, sweet spot,

relaxation, habituation (despook: we must be careful here as there is a technique to follow), approach/retreat /REAPPROACH strategies, how to address a hesitation, refusal, working on separation, giving our horse responsibilities are components that leaders address with their horses to give them confidence, thus reliability and our safety.

**Leadership is not about being in charge.  
Leadership is about taking care of those in your charge.**

SIMON SINEK

These 3 components lead to connexion and partnership and put a foundation on a horse.

Let us not forget we live in a micro-management world where horses are not exposed much to stimuli. We **tend to avoid instead of exposing** our horses and also micro-manage them a lot instead of using self-confidence building strategies to get relaxation. A relaxed horse is braver thus safer.



## **Horsemanship''what exactly is that? Some CONCEPTS**

This of course is not an exhaustive list of horsemanship concepts. There is no particular order of importance in these concepts; I wrote them as they came to my mind. Sorry Indy, Cortado, Lilli as well as Devanee Cardinal, Farrah Green, Fawn Anderson, Lindsey Partridge, Shannon Townsend, Andrea Wady, Cindy Fuerth and Lyne Laforme my female mentors for using the masculine to make text shorter. Must also thank amazing horsemen Larry Stewart, Don Halladay, Buddy Cardinal, Ron Pyne, Lantz McLaren, Jerry Williams, Pete Rodda, David Cowley and my good friends and mentors Pierre Plouffe and Eric St Arnault for instilling me with principles and concepts that we do not hear everyday but have made a **HUGE difference**.

This is an overview of a much larger content. Some of these subjects I have done whole day clinics, so lots more info but this should spark interest for you to explore on these subjects.

-We owe our horse to speak his language NOT ONLY OURS, that is how to use our bodies to communicate with them as well as respect each other's personal space.

-Horsemen put a **foundation on** their horses **before a specialization**, thus a good foundation and then get into dressage, jumping, reining etc.

-Horsemanship is teaching humans by **empowering them to educate their horses**.

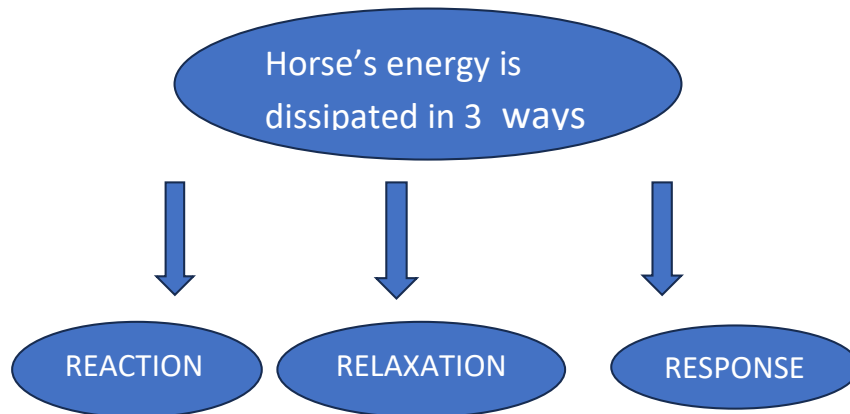
-Willingness and obedience are two different concepts: partnership and connection much better than obedience as a willing partner obeys as there is release after horse responded thus comfort for the horse. Let us not "make" our horse stand at the mounting block for example but ask our horse to do so by helping him understand that he will get peace when he stands still. The rectangle technique is a prior exercise to teach our horse before asking him to stand still at the mounting block. With a more developed horse the **draw** is also interesting to use to ask our horse to come to the mounting block.

***Always keep in mind that you are not looking for obedience but your horse's willingness to cooperate.***

Lyne Laforme

- Horses communicate with their bodies, energy, NOT WORDS. They can however learn to understand some word such as *NO, WHOA, BACK UP, GO RIGHT, LEFT, LOOK RIGHT, WALK, TROT, CANTER* but we **must not overuse** words. You can also use a code for a movement as long as **each code means just one thing**. When using words make sure not to use "whoa" for "slow", as "whoa" means stop and nothing else. And as Andy Booth says, "**whoa**" is **NOT NEGOTIABLE** with our horse. Also, when using words tell them what to do and not what not to do. For example, on the trail, if the horse gets a little tense, say "walk" and not "don't trot" as telepathically the negative is not a concept for the horse, he retains the word "trot".

- Horses dissipate their energy in 3 ways: reaction, relaxation or response.



-Horses are prey, humans are predators. Not easy to develop prey/predator partnership. Humans use the predatory side of the hand way too much. The ‘hello’ is done with the back of the hand and not the palm. The horse sniffs a few times to acknowledge the human.



Photo: Lyne Laforme greeting her horse. Lyne is an FEI elite judge as well as the recipient of the Queens Jubilee Medal for equestrian sports in Canada. She is one of my mentors, an amazing horsewoman.

-Horses as prey **need hands that close slowly and open fast and we humans (predators) have hands that close fast and open slowly.**

-Whether on the lead line or reins, **we should close our fingers starting far from the horse and open them starting close to the horse.**

Lyne Laforme closing and opening the hands on the reins.



Lyne rênes 1.MOV



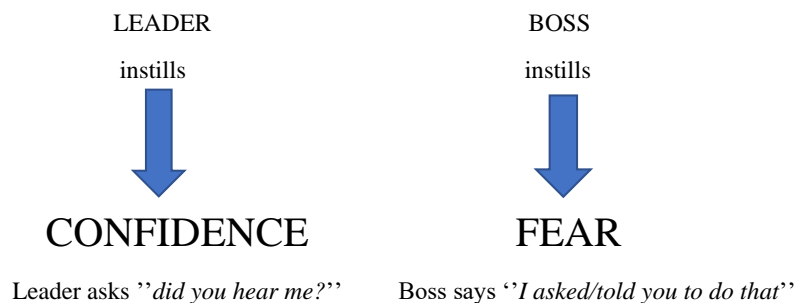
Lyne rênes 2.MOV

-It is VERY IMPORTANT to teach the horse the expected behavior, reward the slightest try by RELEASE, taking away the pressure by turning your body away as our belly button (our core) is what drives our horses. A good horseman can decrease his "chi" without turning his body away but with a young or uneducated horse it is VERY IMPORTANT to teach him that release of pressure by turning away especially for us less experienced persons. Horses have learned to ignore our body language. As soon as someone uses better body language, the horse connects with that person as he sees him/her as a leader.

- **20% pressure, 80% release.**

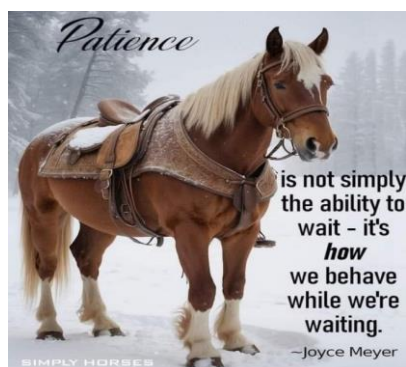
-Also, it is important to avoid using the negative as it does not teach the horse the expected behavior: *DON'T DO THAT* is not significant to the horse. Very important to tell the horse what to do instead of saying *QUIT IT!*

-Horses follow their leader: difference between leader and boss. The leader has more experience, more calm and quiet savvy and instills more confidence, so we must learn to have more savvy.





-Being calm and patient is of extreme importance; the leader makes sure the horse understands the task and has the prerequisites to do the task. Doing NOTHING IS DOING A LOT.



-It is also VERY IMPORTANT to release as soon as horse has the intention to do what was asked. **PRESSURE MOTIVATES**, it's the **RELEASE that TEACHES**.

-Make the wrong decision harder than the good one. **Comfort/effort** concept can be used in some circumstances.

-When teaching something to your horse, the longer it took to get 1 step, the longer you take before asking another step. Make sure the learning is solid before asking more.

-Also make sure the horse responds instead of anticipating the request.

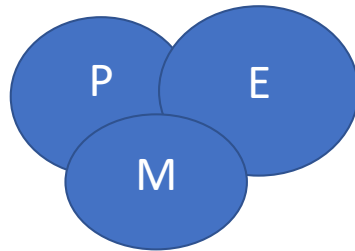
-Horsemanship is not a linear process. Horse development is a process with ups and downs. Every element can be refined, improved, it is NEVER done. One day I was proud to show my mentor how light Poney was. I had worked a lot to get that. His response: "*he can always be lighter*" and that was true as he did become lighter.

-What is demanding when we get into horsemanship is our SOLITUDE as we are often quite alone on our journey and we must get rid of some of our usual ways of doing. As Farrah Green, president of the International Horsemanship Foundation often said to me "*think out of the box*". Rose-Alie St-Hilaire of l'Équitation simplifiée in Quebec says "*the first difficulty for us humans is not learning but UNLEARNING.*"

-When something unexpected comes up, **change your plan** and take the opportunity to develop your horse. I often see the extra long hay truck at the barn, why not use that opportunity to build confidence in your horse: the sentinel, connexion, habituation (despook) strategies. The same with the moving tractor. DO NOT AVOID new experiences. Horse development is not only riding in the arena or the same trails avoiding stimuli. A safe horse is a confident horse around many different stimuli.

-A VERY important concept: “*what’s in it for the horse?*”

- The **3 SPHERES OF HORSE DEVELOPMENT**: are VERY INTERTWINED

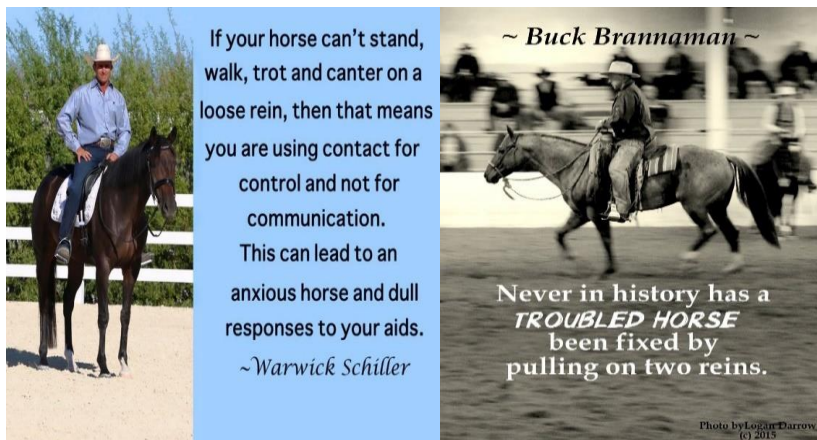


- **physical**: what the horse does.
- **emotional**: how the horse feels about what is going on; is he relaxed?
- **mental**: what does the horse think of what is going on?

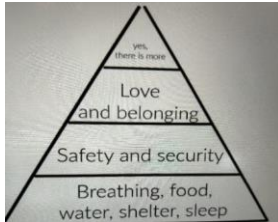
-We all know that not as much time is given to the emotional and mental development of the horse as physical development where we pass hours by the hundreds riding them.

-However, in regards to having a safe horse let us not forget that the “**control box**” of **the feet is in the mental and emotions, thus between the 2 ears, NOT IN THE HANDS!** So, the more we address these 2 components, the safer the horse.

2 world famous horsemen say it.



-The **PYRAMID OF NEEDS** of the horse by Stacy Westfall, USA.



-Eric St-Arnault, an excellent Québécois horseman, says that in our environment where horses are cared for and well fed that the pyramid of needs is

- Security/comfort
- Play and socialisation
- Food

Both Stacy and Eric bring us to the importance when we are with our horse to develop patterns of relaxation.

-How to interpret the **body language** of the horse, VERY important as horses speak with their bodies, not words. We must observe them all the time

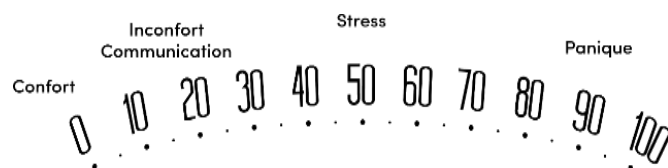
- Signs of a calm horse
- Signs of a stressed horse
- Signs of a bored horse
- Signs of a mad horse

-The more anxiety, the more horses exhibit behaviors such as high head carriage, pawing, rein lameness as well as grinding teeth and displaced mouth behavior when ridden. In more extreme cases weaving and cribbing.

-Different **LEVELS OF STRESS, THE STRESSOMETER'**

- Comfort.
- Discomfort, panic.
- The higher the stress, the bigger the reaction to stimuli.
- Difference between response versus reaction. A **light horse responds to a light stimulus, a reactive horse overreacts to even a light stimulus.**
- Make sure you do not get into "**trigger stacking**" that is exposing your horse to many stimuli **without proper relaxation between each exposure.** The horse after each exposure, keeps a bit of stress and you then experience an overreaction to a stimulus that is usual without consequence. That is the case of the person that tells you "*my horse is never scared of the big ball in the arena but you should have seen him today*". Well today you came into the arena after a walk outside where your horse is not yet very comfortable. He then came in the arena with a higher stress level than usual so he overreacted. After each stressor, wait for the **LICK & CHEW.**

- The example I give for trail riders about “**trigger stacking**” is a person that told me “*it’s weird my horse reacted to a carriage drawn by one horse but we had seen a few 2 horse drawn carriages before that and this time only one horse drawn carriage*”. Well, it is not the one horse drawn carriage that triggered the reaction but not getting the horse on endorphin after each of the previous encounters with horse drawn carriages, so the adrenalin was high.
- Relaxation after each potentially stressful situations is of **EXTREME IMPORTANCE**.



## **Stress-O-Mètre**

Eric St-Arnault

-**SLOW, SLOW, SLOW, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!** Many strategies in horsemanship do not involve more knowledge just slow down and wait for the **endorphin to kick in**.

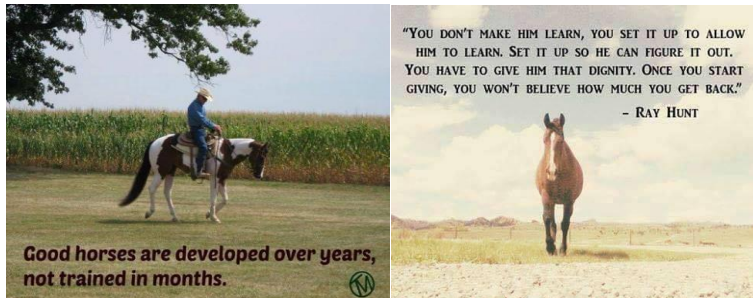
-An important horsemanship principle: **PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE & PREPARE**. Pat Parelli has a saying: “*Proper preparation prevents poor performance*”.

- The **EXTREMELY** important **SOAKING CONCEPT**. Chris Cox constantly reminds us when we teach something to the horse to let it soak in. Do not attempt more until each step is well integrated by the horse. Lyne Laforme says “*Give the horse time to mentally digest the exercise. Reward him for his effort by releasing after his good response.*”

### **20% pressure, 90% release**

-**NEVER ASK FOR MORE UNTIL THE TASK YOU ARE WORKING ON IS VERY WELL DONE and YOUR HORSE IS CONFIDENT**. For example, I would like my horse to walk on the tarp I put on the ground in the arena. **NEVER ASK FOR A SECOND STEP UNTIL YOU HAVE A SERIE OF SUCCESSES WITH THAT FIRST STEP**. You want your horse to be relaxed, head low, breathing slowly. The longer it took for the horse to feel comfortable putting one foot on that tarp, the longer the leader takes before asking for a second step. This principle is **EXTREMELY** important; once you have a confident first step, the others ones will come easier. Chris Cox calls it the “**soaking**” concept. Let the new learning soak in that brain before asking for more.

-It's important when you use voice codes that **each code means only on thing**. You can establish codes instead of words and that is fine as long as each code means only one thing. A "whoa" means a STOP, NOTHING ELSE. As Andy Booth says "whoa" is NOT NEGOTIABLE. People tend to use the "whoa" when asking the horse to slow down or to stay but he is already stopped. "Whoa" is for a STOP nothing else.



**-HORSES EXPLORE IN THE FOLLOWING STEPS (Eric St-Arnault)**

- points the 2 ears and then the 2 eyes.



- then puts his nose on the object and smells it. That is why the "touch it" pattern is so useful for confidence building.





- then explores with his lips, takes the object in his mouth. We often see the horses lift the tarp with their mouth. That is part of exploration. Once again, the " touch it " pattern is put to use.



- then come the feet.



**-5 WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH OUR HORSE** or to ask a horse to move or not move his feet:

- voice
- touch ie Pat Parelli calls it the porcupine
- bubble for the "drive" and the "draw"
- mimic your body ie synchronize with your feet or body for shoulder in/out, renvers/travers, leg yield, side pass.
- intent

The last 2 ways are for more advanced horses but is quite attainable. On the blog as well on [formationequestreenligne.com](http://formationequestreenligne.com) there are documents on mimicry and intent.



Photos: In a clinic demo, Indy lied down mimicking my bent knees.

- Think of your relationship with your horse as a conversation where each has his input and feedback to give each other.

#### **-4 REASONS WHY A HORSE REFUSES TO DO SOMETHING**

HORSE'S BEHAVIOR	WHAT TO DO
Is scared	-Do not underestimate his fear. When a horse is scared it is true, they do not fake it. -Help the horse relax with the "hand touch", porcupine on the poll or the lead line. -Approach/retreat/reapproach.
Does not understand	-Clarify the task; break it down into steps. -Ask for something easier so the horse succeeds. - Keep the horse busy with different patterns so the horse focuses on his leader. -Avoid having the horse on mindless circles but do keep him busy with transitions, changes of direction, back ups etc.
Does not want to do it	-Motivate, make it interesting. -Develop curiosity.
Is not able to do it as he does not have the prerequisites	-Modify task, adjust to horse's ability and preparation. -Break down the task into steps.

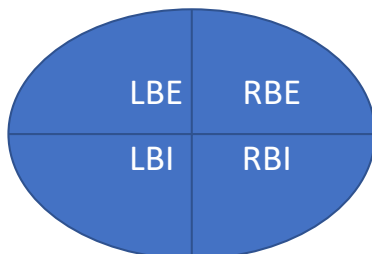
#### **-HORSENALITIES**

-We cannot do it the exact same way with every horse as they do have different horsenalties. Strategies must take into consideration the horse's horsenality as they will differ for each horsenality.

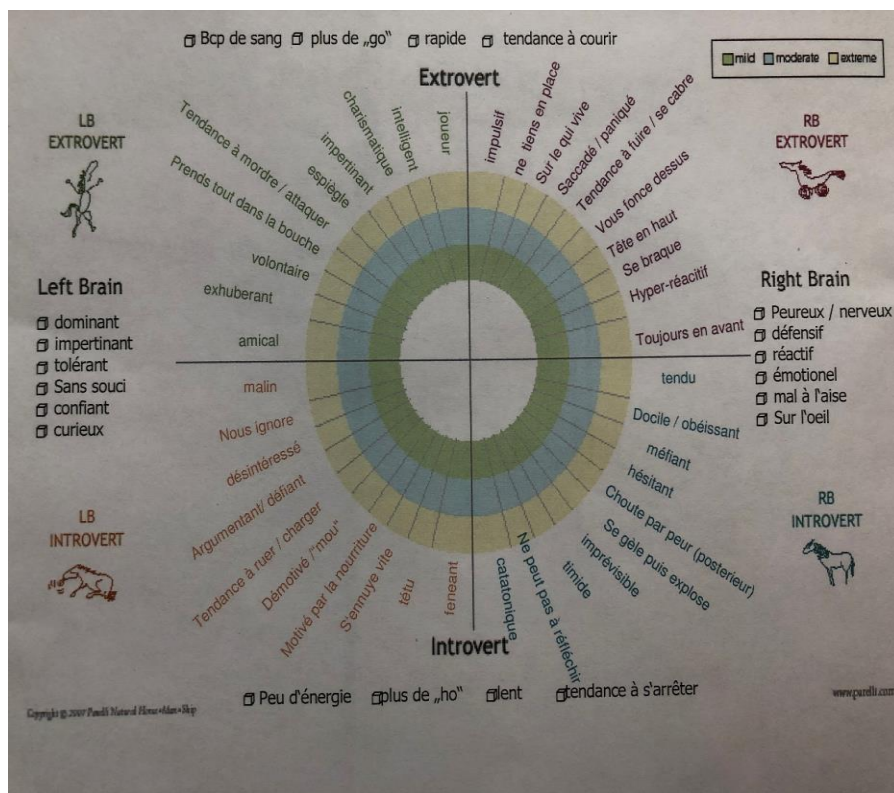
Linda Parelli has developed with the help of many researchers the 4 main horsenalties. The horsenality chart helps us evaluate our horse to see which is his dominant trait.

As we progress in our horsemanship with our equine partner, the horse usually becomes more centered and we have less extreme reactions.

- Right brain vs left brain
- Introvert vs extrovert



-Each horsenality has their characteristics; we need to know how to handle each of those horses to help them in their development. There are different strategies to do as well avoid for each horsenality.





**Left-Brain Extroverts need to be more:**

**RESPONSIVE**

*"You're not the boss of me!"*

Left-Brain Extroverts are born to argue. If you can use their curiosity to develop responsiveness, rather than demand it, they'll get calmer and more connected.

*The Touch It Pattern is ideal. Keep them guessing, and don't be too repetitive – you usually get to do it the same way about three times and then you'd better think of something new! Remember this horse is a super-learner. Be provocative and progressive – it keeps sessions mentally stimulating.*

**Right-Brain Extroverts need to be more:**

**CALM**

*"I don't feel safe."*

When you can help the RBE get calm, they get more connected to you. Only then you can work on responsiveness as they will be less reactive.

*You need to be a strong, calm, focused leader; rapid disengagements will help you get control as they interrupt the horse's flight response. In some circumstances, asking the horse to speed up for a lap and 'cruise for three' until he volunteers to slow down or stand next to you is very effective.*

**Left-Brain Introverts need to be more:**

**CONNECTED**

*"What's in it for me?"*

When you give the Left-Brain Introvert what he likes (cookies, rest, scratches), he'll get more connected to you and then more responsive to your ideas. LBIs are already calm, so that's not usually the issue!

*Give him a treat and rub him - don't ask him to do anything. Once he's looking to you with a more positive expression, ask him to do something really little and give him more treats and scratches. Build from there by occasionally asking for more effort or two or three tasks before treating. One day, you'll be more interesting than the treat! LBI horses are physically slow (at first) but mentally fast. Learn to be mentally intense but move more slowly at first, and use reverse psychology by doing things like asking him to go slower rather than speed up. This helps keep the connection.*

**Right-Brain Introverts need to be more:**

**CONNECTED**

*"I don't trust you."*

When you can prove to the Right-Brain Introvert that you are not going to rush them and you understand their need for things to be slow, they start to trust you, becoming calmer and then more responsive.

*Doing nothing is the best thing when it comes to Right-Brain introvert horses. Just standing next to them, or sitting, or leaning in a friendly way until they take a deep breath is worth waiting for. As they start to let down their defenses and relax, you can begin to communicate, gently asking for what you want and waiting for them to respond rather than 'upping your phases.' Gentle repetition works better than increasing pressure.*

**MORE INFO ON PARELI.COM**



**Extrovert - Fights You**

Needs to play. If he finds you boring or he's unhappy being with you, he may become unwilling; otherwise this horse is the least likely to be herd bound. He's looking for adventure! If he fights you, it's because he wants to do something else, so make sure you've got him in the mood before asking.

Needs to feel safe. Don't go over thresholds; speed up to match his energy, sending the horse back faster than you ask him out again.

**Left-Brain - Defiance**

Needs a reason to be motivated to leave his comfortable place—a stop and rest, praise and a treat, etc. Go very slowly, ask less than he offers and wait for him to offer more.

**Right-Brain - Fear**

Needs to trust you more. Slow way down and don't ask anything while horse is introverted. Wait until he is breathing and open to you, and then ask only a little. Thresholds are very close.

**Introvert - Shuts Down**



Charts are from the Parelli savvy club.

## My vision of the horsenalties

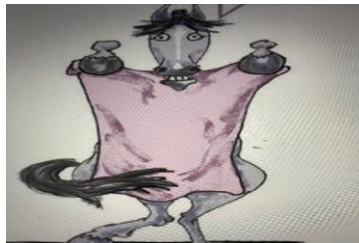
### Right brain extrovert



### Left brain extrovert



### Right brain introvert



### Left brain introvert



## -TREATS

I will not go in detail in the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of giving treats to our horse besides saying that positive reinforcement by treats is fine as long as the **treat is given right away** so that the horse makes the link between their good response and the treat. Horses must be polite and not push his human to get the treat.

Giving treats for no reason is also fine as long as we do not create a pattern such as every time I arrive at the barn I give a treat as then we create an expectation.

However, treats SHOULD NOT BE USED TO ENTICE A BEHAVIOR, TO BRIBE BUT AS A REWARD for the good response.

IT IS FOR THE HUMAN TO GO TO THE HORSE TO GIVE THE TREAT AND NOT THE HORSE COME TO US and even at times PUSH THE HUMAN.

Lindsey Partridge of Harmony Horemanship in Ontario has taught me an interesting concept about treats. She uses a nice word when a horse does something well, such as *'good girl, good boy'*. Her horses then know they did well and when the horse does something exceptionally well, something new or something quite difficult for the horse, she says a loud *'yes'* and gives the horse a treat.

Her reasons for this are twofold:

-as she does a lot of ground work with her horses and teaches many different things she would be giving out tons of goodies a day. Also, when she does an obstacle course, she cannot stop to give a goodie after each jump or obstacle so the verbal is sufficient and at the end of the ride she says a loud *'yes'* and gives the treat.

I have been with Lindsey and her horses and she has the pouch on her side or in her hand and the horses **NEVER** push her to get the goodie. She will even shake the pouch by the horse when she teaches us to show that its the **human that goes to give the treat to the horse and not the horse that comes to get the goodie out of our pocket, hand.**

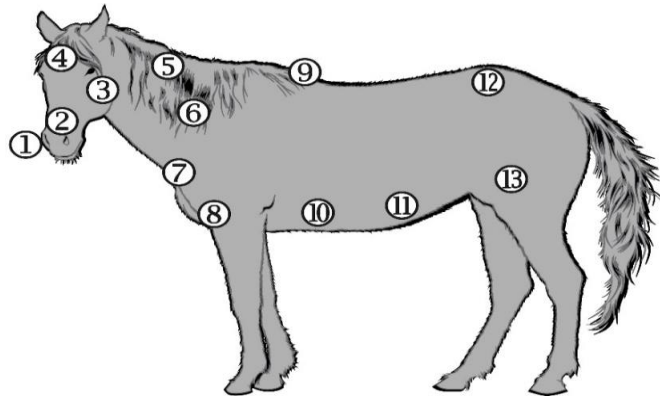
Lyne Laforme showed in a clinic where a horse was quite pushy to get his treat to pass your hand with the treat under the horse's chin and give the treat on the other side.

## THE BUTTONS

-Horses communicate with each other through body language. Sharon Wilsie and Grechen Vogel have described those buttons very well in their documents. They are very useful for us when we play at liberty or when we communicate with our horses in the paddock or in the arena when they are online.

Horses communicate with each other about 4 subjects.

GREET
GO SOMEWHERE
GROOM
GONE



Number	Button name	Rôle of the button
1	Hello	The greeting button.
2	Play	Be careful as this somewhat invites your horse to invade your territory.
3	Move your head	Horses use this button a lot. Moves the head only.
4	Friendly	Only close friends can touch them there.
5	Follow me	Mare's asking her foal to follow her; he is then protected by the 4 feet of the mare.
6	Half neck	This button asks for the head as well as the front feet to move away.
7	Shoulder	Same as no 6. Easier for us humans.
8	Back up	Horses use this button to ask a herd mate to back up. Humans can also politely ask a horse to back up with this button.
9	Grooming	Horses scratch each other there. When human scratches the horse, especially on the wither, it decreases it's stress a lot.
10	Girth	Horses ask another one to move forward or sideways to give space.
11	Jump or buck	A very sensitive button asking the horse to jump forward or to buck.
12	Push forward	Asks the horse to move forward. A horse led by this button is submitted to his leader as it pushes the 3-9 o'clock drive line. As we often see it is the horse in the back that drives the horses in front of him.

13	Move your hindquarters	This is the button for the disengagement of the hindquarters. When a horse asks this of another horse it prevents the other horse to buck.
14	Sit	Not on the schema. This button is situated between the buttocks and the hock and helps the horse step his hind legs under the mass for collection. There is more bend in the hind leg for the levade, piaffe as well as more collection as the hind legs come well under the mass.

### THE JOIN-UP

Many techniques to have the horse come to us when playing at liberty or when the horse is in the herd. A horse that is alone in the paddock will come as they are very social animals; in a herd it is completely different.

- Disengagement of the hindquarters which brings the head to you.
- Mirror effect thus match the energy and change direction before the horse.
- Be interesting to develop curiosity in the horse.
- Claim the territory that is take his space.

The first sign of a horse connecting: the horse **points his ear closest to you towards you.**

Make sure you do not "drive" the horse when he looks at you. Sometimes we need to back up just a bit. Not too much as that might give my horse the impression that he drives me or at times the impression that I am avoiding his closeness.

Other signs come not necessarily in this order

- Head and neck get lower in a relaxed position.
- Horse moves a bit closer to you
- Lick & chew.

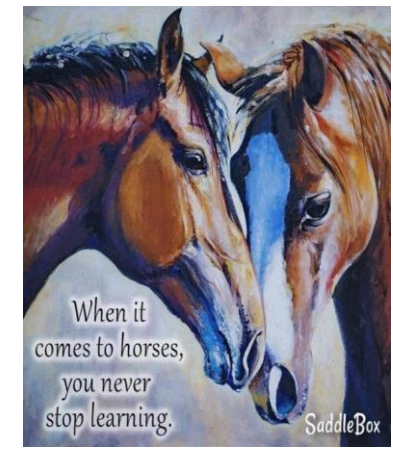
And last but not least.



...we must never forget, every time we sit on a horse, what an extraordinary privilege it is: to be able to unite one's body with that of another sentient being, one that is stronger, faster and more agile by far than we are, and uncommonly forgiving.

Quote: William Steinkraus, Olympic Equestrian

22



There is no such thing as a 'naughty horse'.

There are just hurt, frightened, tired, frustrated, hungry and confused horses expressing how they feel, in the only way they can.

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## TOOLS to better communicate with your horse

### 1. The stick

-The stick is an extension of our arm as horses are built long and we are built in height. Their butt is far behind their eyes. All horsemen/women I have met in my 10-month journey encourage us to use a stick instead of the lead rope as it is more precise. With the lead we often touch the horse unwillingly and a responsive horse should move when touched. For a light horse a phase 4 corresponds to a very light touch so the stick makes sure we do not desensitize our horse.

-Also, the stick is useful to cut the horse's drive lines instead of pulling on the lead line whether leading the horse or helping him stay in his rectangle.

-We must practice using the stick properly. In clinics, lots of time is taken for us to be more proficient at it; we tend to overuse it, thus overstimulate the horse which gets him more reactive and eventually less responsive.

-We must also **not forget to put the stick down and go neutral when the horse has responded**. We need to be constantly reminded of this as it is far from natural for us humans. It is something we must work on all the time.

-Some horsemen put plastic or a piece of cloth at the end of the stick.

### 2. The round rope

-A round rope definitely transfers '*feel*' much better than a flat rope like a lunge.

-The horse keeps a **FLOAT IN THE ROPE** at all times. That float however is as strong as a steel bar to influence your horse to go forward, turn and even back up. When ponied a horse changes position from the feel on the rope.



-For refinement I appreciate using a knot for the rope instead of the metal clasp as it is lighter for the horse and transmits the FEEL very well. It has the disadvantage of being fixed thus not easily removeable.



### 3. The rope halter

-The rope halter helps us teach the horse to “**follow a feel**”. Once the horse is educated, he will follow pretty well in an ordinary halter but a rope halter definitely has more finesse. If your horse is pulling a lot on the lead line, use an ordinary halter until the horse “ follows a feel” and is light as it is wider thus less pressure on the facial nerves.

It is important to adjust the halter appropriately to protect the horse’s sensitive nose.  
When using a rope halter, the horse **MUST FOLLOW A FEEL ON THE ROPE** otherwise too much pressure on the nose.

I have been to many clinics when the horsemen put the usual halter back on the horse, as the nose band is much wider to absorb the pressure.



Photos: Cyrial Cambrian Horsemanship. KO means not OK





The most common error is that the part of the halter on the nose is too low. In so many clinics I have attended the horseman/woman corrects the position of the halters.

Rose-alie St-Hilaire of Equitation Simplifiée in Quebec describes what needs to be addressed when adjusting the halter.

- 1- The nose band must be 2 fingers wide under the zygomatic process.
- 2- The knot under the chin must free the trough enough to pass our fist.
- 3- The ‘‘under throat’’ must be behind the ganache.
- 4- The closing knot must be done by passing the end of the rope under the halter.
- 5- One thinks of the letter D so the end points in the good direction, thus towards the back, not toward the eye.

You can use a halter that ties on the right side of the head so the horse does not always turn his head to the left to go into the halter. One must however make sure the knot is done so the end of the rope does not hit the eye as in the photo on the left.



## HOW TO START: let us improve our partnership and connection.

Steps are not necessarily in the exact order the subjects are described as it depends on the horse's education. The section on CONFIDENCE also has content that is important for the emotional development of our horse.

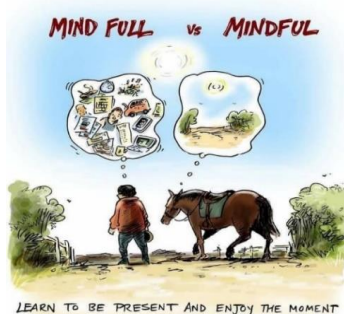
In French, on [lynelaforme.coach/blog/](http://lynelaforme.coach/blog/) a series of articles on **PARTENARIAT** as well as on [formationequestreenligne.com](http://formationequestreenligne.com) working on our connection and partnership with our horse.

### 1- Be with your horse

-Our mind should be with our horse and not with our friends, our TO DO list and forgetting our horse, especially when we are developing something new, educating the horse. Horsemen say we are not polite as we talk to our friends and sort of ignore our horse as our mind wanders away to our grocery list, bills to pay, what's for supper? etc.

-When we are with our horse our mind should be WITH OUR HORSE!

-We need to **focus more** on our horse.



**Undemanding time creates a relationship, a good connection.** We must not forget that our relationship is very often based on work, work, work for the horse.

In horsemanship programs one of the first homework is for us to sit close to our horse or in the paddock and observe our horse whether he is alone or interacting with his herd. Horsemen remind us that very often our relationship with our horse is go fetch him, groom sometimes quite fast as we are often in a hurry, ride and put our horse away. Not much undemanding time. Its all about work, work, work.

Some time back a friend talked to me that she had observed a lady who does not ride her horse and her horse always came to her very willingly when she went to get him in the paddock or when at liberty in the arena. She said in those 2 cases her horse did not come. She asked ‘why?’. My response was ‘*if every time I went to your home we pass the*

*vacuum, wash the dishes instead of having a beer, coffee or tea I would not be as willing to go when you invited me to have a chat*". Interestingly this answer was very revealing for her as she had never realized that all she did with her horse was oriented to work: often grooming her horse with her instructor, chatting away +++, taking horse into arena, riding him and put him back to his paddock.

## **2- Greet your horse**

-Before we attempt anything with our horse, we must first greet him. It's done with the **back of our hand** (the inside is the predatory side of the hand).



Photo: Cortado greeting Lori Ann.

-The horse will sniff a few times and say OK and we should not attempt to touch him until he has given us permission. Only then should we INVITE him to put his head in the halter. The horse comes to the halter and not the human putting the halter on the horse's head. When the horse moves his neck and head away and not his feet when you approach often it means that he is inviting you in his bubble. You now have the OK to have him put on the halter. We often feel when this happens that our horse is turning away from us but not necessarily. I however agree that it is not always easy to know the difference.

-It is also important to do the "hand touch" when we reconnect as we often disconnect with them when we talk to our friends. We are not always polite; they are OK with that but we should **RECONNECT** before engaging into some activity with them.

-When you see horsemen with a horse, they are with the horse, not with the human. They are connected.

-Be careful about using too much the inside of your hand (predatory side) until the horse is very comfortable with you.

-We also use the "hand touch" to invite our horse to lower his head when he is a bit nervous as this permits the endorphins to kick in.

### 3- Putting the halter on

-Horse should bring his head in the halter and his head should be low. You can use the porcupine on the opposite cheek as well as the porcupine on the poll or the "hand touch" to ask your horse to lower and turn his head into his halter. Your right hand with the long end of the halter on top of the neck invites the horse to turn his head towards you. The left hand offering the halter to the horse.

-Horsemen often suggest that we ask the horse to back up a few steps once halter is on to see if they are connected, follow a feel on the rope as well as respectful of our space.

-Once they learn this, putting on the bridle later will be easy. In horsemanship clinics we are often asked to put the halter or bridle, kneeling down or sitting in a chair so the horse has to come to us and lower his head.

I use rope halters and have some that tie to the left as usual and some that tie to the right so the horse does not always turn his head left to put on the halter. We must be careful to make the knot so it does not go towards the horse's eye.

### 4-Friendly game

-Pat Parelli calls this the friendly game. We must be able to gently stroke our horse everywhere on his body. Dogs like being petted, cats and horses enjoy being stroked.

-When he is a bit worried or at times does not like to be touched in some areas, we must use the approach/retreat/**reapproach** technique and go SLOW! SLOW!

- We have the habit of tapping them when they are good. That is a predator-to-predator way of doing. We, humans sure appreciate a good tap on the back when we did something good. **Horses should BE STROKED, NOT TAPPED. STROKING IS SLOWER and it HELPS DEVELOP A SOFTER AND RYTHMIC CONNECTION.**

Many studies have shown us that TOUCH is very important to horses as it has a calming effect.

-In a horsemanship clinic we are reprimanded for tapping our horse. At the last Olympics riders were also reprimanded for tapping their horse after a good performance. Prey do not appreciate tapping, predators do.

- We then expose our horse to the carrot stick, the stick with a flag or bag at the end as well as other elements; we must use phases when we move the object. Also, we often start by walking with the element in front and the horse coming along. This way the object does not get any closer to the horse as we move together. We want to develop curiosity in our horse.

As well, always think of were to start:

- the nose to the back that is front to back. The “*touch it*” pattern is useful.
- while moving to the back, start with left side before the right side because of right eye issues with some horses.
- then the right side.
- finally, the tail area, often a fragile zone for many horses.
- then we think of height, so we expose our horse starting with the feet and going up to the top of the back and eventually over the back. Some horses are more fearful under the belly but most of them it is on top.
- Your movements must be regular and you increase gradually the speed.
- It’s important to hold a fairly short lead when playing the friendly game with the stick as if the horse gets tense and moves, we can right away bring his head toward us which keeps the hind feet far away and avoid being hit by the powerful hooves. We then of course must decrease our speed or come back to an area where the horse is comfortable. This is the approach/retreat/reapproach concept.

## **5- Grooming**

-Grooming is an “**act of love**” say the horsemen, thus be gentle, go slowly and observe your horse.

-The face is usually the hardest to touch: it is quite invasive for us to go straight to their face. As horsemen say “*put yourself in your horse’s shoes and you will know how he feels*”.

-Ideally grooming is done with horse loose in his stall or in the alley with “ground tie” or the rectangle. The horse connected to you, not to his hay or people and horses passing by. Cross ties are used minimally, as less connection between human and horse and less responsibility given to the horse. Also, many times cross ties are a bit short and the horse’s head is a high which does not encourage endorphin release. We want the wither no higher than the poll. Horses **should however definitely be able to be tied thus give into pressure; being tied is part of their basic education.**

-Grooming is not only to clean our horse but it establishes a connection as we evaluate our horse: how he responds to touch, is he light? Does he have any lesions? Is he relaxed? This is when we evaluate our horse’s response to light pressure everywhere on his body. I like my horses to respond to a phase one in the “touch” thus respond to a light touch of the hair. This makes for very pleasurable horses to handle and ride.

-Important to teach our horse a “**cue**” to **lift the feet** as then when we try to apply bandages, shave hair on the legs for an ultrasound, they do not constantly lift their feet. I learned from many horsemen the chestnut for the front feet and the joint for the hind legs. Whatever cue you use as long as it always the same. It could even be a verbal cue.

For a horse to give his feet is a very confident move as in nature they need their 4 feet to get away from predators. My barn owner adopted 2 wild Norwegian fjords and I understood this concept as even in their stall at first, they were very weary to give us a foot. Horsemen say “ *if a horse does not give his feet easily, I would not sit on him as he does not give in to pressure thus willingness as well as confidence are still to develop.*”. Of course, we do not blame the horse but help him be confident with having a foot off the ground. In the case of wild 10 and 11 year old horses it was a totally different and fragile issue.

### **6-Claim your territory: you want to develop a polite horse**

- It’s **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** for the horse **not to make us move our feet**. Easier said than done as they are experts at subtly having us move our feet. Especially **DO NOT BACK UP** or even more subtly back your shoulders while feet do not move.

Quite interesting as if a person came up right to our face when talking to us, we would not appreciate it and back off but when our 4-legged furry friends do the same we do not necessarily realize what they are doing. A polite horse **ALWAYS GIVES US OUR SPACE**.

-Horses often

- Push into your personal space.
- Step on your toes, ouch!
- Push you when you bring them a bucket of grain or hay.
- Walk too fast when you are leading them, sometimes they lag behind & other times they even walk in front of you.
- Do not synchronize to leader’s feet but establish the rhythm and leader follows; the human at times needs to run to catch up to the horse.
- Look away from you & push their shoulder into you while being led.
- Pull you to eat grass when you are trying to lead them. See section on grazing.
- Knock you over when something scary is more important to them than your personal space.



-Horses should **stand at an arm's length away from us and come closer only when invited.**

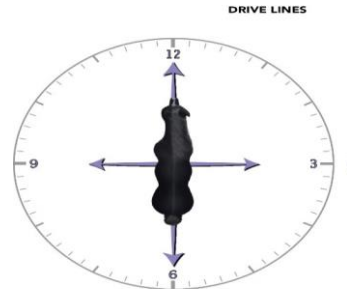
The **“tik-tok”** method teaches them this fact very fast and it is a clear message but not attacking the horse as it is the horse that decides not to **“hit the fan”**(the fan being a phase 4 with the stick) as I call it. It's the horse's decision and not the human's. The technique consists of using a short crop in front of your belly button and moving it horizontally slowly, a little faster, faster and real fast like a fan if the horse does not respect your space. You always use phases when working with a horse, the lighter the better. **Release as soon as horse responds.**

**Do not forget it the RELEASE that TEACHES.**



Photos: France asking Pax to stay far away. He could be closer but should not make France back up or more subtly not move her feet but back her shoulders. Lyne Laforme demonstrating in a clinic.

I also have seen horsemen use the crop perpendicular to the horse's longitudinal drive line (6 to 12) and use phases.



Photos: Demonstrating with Indy cutting her longitudinal drive line (6-12 on diagram) with a phase 1.

I like these 2 techniques as it keeps a "float in the rope". It's the stick that does the phases and no pulling on the rope.

**Do not forget it's THE RELEASE THAT TEACHES!** We never say it often enough!

-People tend to replace the horse and they do it year after year as they never taught the horse the appropriate response because there was no release or not long enough release when the horse stayed in place. When proper release is given, the horse learns. Also, when it's the horse that decides to keep from invading our territory, it is **his decision and he gets release when he adopts the appropriate behavior**. This way the horse learns and remembers.

-Horses learn it fast with the appropriate strategy but we are not consistent.

-Horse comes closer **upon invitation only**.

The **leader does not move his feet** it is for the horse to move away from leader. A horse that is more subtle will make his leader back his shoulders at times.

The **MISSING** step for most people is to practice a specific set of groundwork exercises, so your horse is focused on you, doesn't push into your space. You build a connection together, and your horse doesn't drag you around nor pull you to eat grass anymore. Specific groundwork exercises like:

- Don't push into me
- Step out of my space when I ask, so I have room
- Don't go too fast
- Don't lag behind me
- Don't go too slow
- Don't run me over
- Don't zone me out and focus on something else
- Don't eat grass unless you have permission

More on grass later at no.16 on Respect and leadership.



## 7- Leading your horse

-Your horse should **follow a "FEEL"** on the lead line and **KEEP A FLOAT in the ROPE** at all times. This means you will need your stick to cut the drive lines, more often the longitudinal drive line, to teach your horse.

-At all times **NEVER a STRAIGHT LINE** between your hand and your horse except lightly when directing a horse and it is done with a soft feel on the rope. The horse should "follow a feel" and that feel is as solid as a metal rod. The horse should always keep a **"SMILE IN THE ROPE"!**

If the horse puts tension in the rope if is for the leader to shake the rope so the horse so the horse gives into the pressure and maintains the float.

A light horse is a pleasure to handle.



Photos: On the left: my friend Josée sent Arthax on a FLOAT in front of Merlin. He was beside Merlin on the wide trail. When we arrived on a very narrow trail she had 2 choices, send Arthax in front or in the back of the ridden horse. The horse must FOLLOW A FEEL on the lead line to accomplish this as the rope is soft but acts like a metal bar.

On the right: going for a walk on the property with barn owners 3 horses: the 2 arabs maintain a float in the rope at all times.

## 8-Synchronism

-Animals are followers by nature. Babies follow their mothers and later on they follow herd mates.



Horses are also **followers**, they follow mom when they are foals and then the herd. It is natural for a horse to synchronize with his leader's feet. You **vary the rhythm** to see if horse is connected with you. Head should be low as you want horse to be relaxed.



Photos: Lindsey Partridge of Harmony Horsemanship Ontario: mare & foal. Elisabeth Gevas's 2 Norwegian fjords.

-The frequency & variety of the steps depends on the horse, his connection to you and his anxiety. We do not ask a horse that is scared to synchronize. This is one occasion where we must give the horse time to evaluate if he is safe (reverse synchronism) and then get his attention back to us with different patterns and then once we got his mind we start synchronizing again.

-Walk, trot, stop and backup. With an unconfident horse this helps him connect with the leader but we must also think that with an unconfident horse too much variety can increase the anxiety. So, with each horse it is different but the horse should be connected to the leader, aware of the environment but connected to the leader.

### **If you have the mind you have the feet. The mind is the CONTROL BOX of the feet, NOT THE HANDS.**

-Later on, practice **synchronizing with your breathing** that is when I breathe out horse should slow down even stop. Our horse is very connected to the rhythm of our breath.



Photo: Lyne Laforme, one of my mentors, says that breathing is essential to connect with our horse.

-And eventually we can think of synchronizing with our body position: an excellent exercise to do when lunging as often with lunging we end up with what horsemen call a DOPE on the ROPE.

Human's posture	Distribution of horses weight	Horse's pace
Shoulders forward	60% on forehand 40% on hind	Walk
Shoulders aligned with body	50-50	Trot
Shoulders back	40% on forehand 60% on hind	Canter

-A more advanced horse will synchronize with your body for shoulder-in, revers/travers, leg yield as well as side pass with leader on the ground.

-Horses naturally synchronize with our shoulders when we're on the ground. When we move our shoulders right or left it moves our longitudinal drive line to OPEN or CLOSE the door.

-Practice a weave as well as squares and rectangles and you'll get a feel for that.

### **9-Verbal « whoa »**

-Should be an instant stop. Don't forget to use phases and once acquired you should need a VERY light phase 1. Andy Booth says the "**whoa**" IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.

-The "*whoa*" is an ESSENTIAL COMPONENT of horse development as one does not want to pull on the lead rope, halter, nor bridle to have a STOP.

-We must practice. This does not take more time, just more focus on our part. Every time you handle your horse you can practice.

-Slow between phases when you teach and then fast from phase 1 to 4 when horse knows so you don't make him dull.

-We practice to ultimately have a very hushed "**whoa**" as our horse is listening and connected to his leader. Just make sure that you name your horse to get his attention before asking for the stop especially when you are, for example, on a trail ride talking with friends. It's important to get the horse's attention before asking something even if you have an experienced horse that is well connected to you.

### **10- Suspension rein**

-The extremely IMPORTANT suspension rein must be practiced all the time until it is an instant reflex. This, as well as the "**whoa**" ensure our safety and to practice it does not take more time. Every time you walk with your horse, you can practice it.

-The suspension rein stops the 4 feet **WITHOUT TENSION ON THE LEAD LINE OR THE REINS, THERE IS NO PULLING BACK.** Extremely useful in riding when on a loose rein as there is **NO PULL TO STOP.** A light suspension rein can also be used to slow the gait.

-Suspension rein is practiced on the ground, with the lead rope as well as in saddle. Once taught if you go bridleless you can have a stop from an imaginary suspension rein as well as in liberty.

-When you start a horse in a horsemanship program, our horse is ridden with a loose rein as the **“HEAD is THE CONTROL BOX THAT CONTROLS THE FEET, NOT THE HANDS”.** The rider learns to use his focus, body and then legs before asking with the hands. Hands are for finesse, thus the finishing touch, not the beginning.

-We humans are experts at pulling back. This means we must develop our horses emotionally for them to be relaxed. The section on **CONFIDENCE** describes some strategies.

-That is the way to get a **STOP**, of course also with the seat, when riding as the concept is

-**2 reins to communicate** like in “dressage”; contact is not used to stop a horse.

Andy Booth says the **legs are the accelerator & seat the decelerator.**

-**1 rein to control** either suspension rein or lateral flexion.



### **11-Reverse synchronism**

There are 2 times that the leader follows the horse's feet and that is if the horse **freezes** as he is **fearful**, we must wait for the horse to lick and chew and lower his head. One of the best examples of this is when people take their horse out of the trailer and do not give any time for the horse to evaluate the environment, the human just moves on without regard for the horse.

The other occasion is when a horse stops to check out something in the environment; it can be because of **fear** or **curiosity**. The leader also looks at what the horse is looking at so the horse knows his humans is checking things out for him.



Photos of REVERSE SYNCHRONISM: on the left at her second parade Indy turned 180 degrees to look behind her as the truck pulling the float behind us broke down and came right behind her a firetruck with siren and strobe lights ON... yes ON. Young Indy had never seen a fire truck, she turned and looked and I accompanied her by looking at the truck as well and I had LOOSE REINS. We got teased when friends saw this posted photo as they said Indy did the parade backwards.

In the middle, at her first parade, Indy intrigued, curious or worried. I accompanied her looking in same direction, loose reins.

On the right Indy stopped to look at mama deer and her twins. By the time I got my phone for photo only 1 fawn left. She was curious and of course not fearful at all; but this sure warranted me to stop to let her look. As horsemen say *NEVER KILL CURIOSITY!*

It's important that we accompany our horse when he is curious as this is respect. Even more important when he is worried as our safety is in jeopardy.

It's also a basic concept of PURE liberty where the human synchronizes with the horse. When it's time for horse to synchronize with leader, the human asks with the hand touch, which reconnects horse to human.

## 12-The imaginary rectangle

-Rectangle technique is one of the first techniques horsemen show us as

- it increases the connection between human and horse
- helps work our phases and the release
- gives responsibility to our horse as he is the one who decides to not hit the fan, instead of us replacing the horse time after time
- gives more responsibility when we increase the time in the imaginary rectangle as well as the distance the leader goes away.

The first element of the technique is " ground tie" with a horse in his sweet spot.





Photos: Pony in his rectangle. Indy in her imaginary rectangle in the alley while farrier trimming her left hind hoof and I went to fetch another horse in the paddock.

-Technique is important, proper use of the stick, phases, release when response. Phase 4 would be “*don't hit the fan*”; we try to go there the least often but must do so to get the horse light at phase one and even “intent”; that is just the leader looking at the horse is enough to keep him in his imaginary rectangle.

-We start standing in front a bit to the side of the horse, stick perpendicular to the longitudinal drive line. It is good at first to have someone in the back with a stick as some horses might decide to back up.

-We then address the side, cutting the lateral drive line as needed.



Photos: Stick cutting the longitudinal “drive line” and the lateral “drive line”, phase 1.

- As in any technique, it is important to let the learning “soak in” before attempting a second phase. Remember it is the RELEASE that TEACHES. The longer it took the horse to master a step, the longer we take before asking for more.

-It is also used for the head so the horse does not move his head from right to left or up and down but stays put in place. Some horseman say it is an imaginary triangle or “V” for the head, triangle point down or an imaginary rectangle. This is important when you

are grooming your horse, even in cross ties some horses constantly move their head right and left and shake those cross ties big time. Then if loose, they to go smell everything around, their nose is not in the rectangle.



-Very important for the horse to be in his "sweet spot" otherwise the horse is concentrated on his fear, not his leader.

-Once acquired and it is solid, you can increase the time and then the distance and eventually both. I can leave Indy in alley in the barn to get my tack, another horse or whatever task. Also, in the public at Upper Canada Village for example, as long as she feels safe and she will wait for me while I do something such as talk to visitors in the village etc. I purposely turn my back to her telling her I trust her judgment.

When the horse is confident in his rectangle and he can stay a long time, then we can increase the distance. VERY IMPORTANT when we leave the horse to ask him to STAY. Use of a word, a touch on the forehead or a code for the horse to understand he is asked to stay and wait. I at times forget and the horses follow me. MY ERROR!

Also important **not to say "whoa"** as the horse is already stopped. The "whoa" is for a stop, not to stay stopped. I use the word "stay" and sometimes a hand touch on the forehead.



In everything we do with our horse it is important not to ask for more until the step we are asking for is solidly acquired. The “**soaking**” concept very important for the horse to retain the learning. Let it soak in, do not ask for more.



Photos: The rectangle: Aramis waiting for his lunch in the stall, door open. Friend’s new horse, Jack ground tied the first time the farrier came. He is now in his rectangle, thus rope on his back. I stay with him as it is more recent, the others in the herd stay without me being beside them all the time.

13- **Sentinel concept** (more advanced concepts on this subject in the section on CONFIDENCE). Here I will address the concept in terms of the human’s safety.

-Leader should be between what horse perceives as DANGEROUS and the horse. If the horse **shies away from the danger**, this keeps the **human safe** as the horse will not bump into him.

I have to say that the one time I did not obey this rule as on the other side of Indy was a BEAR, yes, a BEAR about 30 feet away. As she was raised for 5 years in wild B-C she was not scared of predators per say but of predatory behavior. So that is one time that I stayed on the wrong side. Indy looked calmly at the bear who was not in a predatory mode and continued her way to the field.

Being on the wrong side is often an issue as people lead their horses only from the left so they are in the wrong place ½ of the time the horse meets something that worries him. Horses should be led both right and left.

-When doing your patterns on the ground, such as squares, rectangles, circles, weaves, zigzags, boomerangs, the leader should start by being the sentinel if you are dealing with a unconfident horse. Then you gradually change the roles, the horse being the sentinel.





Photo: Manon and Jack take turns being the sentinel with the ball.

-So, you change sides to be the sentinel when something scary instead of trying to either cover the horse's eyes or even at times make a long detour to avoid the stimulus.



Photos: Indy synchronizes with my feet even if not planned, it is automatic. Photo on the right is the farrier's truck with fire. Photo taken in a hurry but all was there: synchronism, float in the rope and relaxed horse with poll at the height of the withers. An experienced horse does not need the human to be the sentinel.

-The sentinel is also used as the **“police”** such as when horses passing by hay stacked on the right pull their leader to get some hay. Why are not the leaders on the right of their horse, their body acting as the police? Instead of pulling on the lead line or the reins. The same when there is a horse in a stall on the right that tends to bite your horse as you pass by in the alley. The horsemanship concept *“protect your herd of 2”* means the leader should be between the danger and the horse thus often on the right side of the horse and politely ask the horse in the stall to back up usually by cutting their longitudinal *“drive line”*.

**14- Relaxation: the importance of the “ LICK AND CHEW”** (More on relaxation in the Confidence section)

-Every time that head comes up we need to address it so that the horse lowers his head and gets on endorphin and not adrenalin.

-To have horse lower his head, 3 ways:

- Hand touch
- Porcupine on the halter
- Porcupine on the poll.

-Approach/retreat/reapproach techniques (see section on Confidence) such as circles, zigzags etc are important to achieve relaxation same as sentinel concept. We humans are **too direct line and go straight towards something. For our horse, that is not the way to build confidence.**

-We cannot get anything from our horse if he is not confident and relaxed as then he is more concerned with the environment than his leader.

**Relaxation is prerequisite for learning.**



Photos: Indy has the reputation of licking like a lizard. Yes, but my answer has always been the same ***“IT’S NOT THE HORSE IT’S THE PROGRAM THAT HELPS HER TO BE RELAXED AND BE CONFIDENT”.***

**SO, UNTIL NOW THE ABOVE CONCEPTS DO NOT TAKE MUCH MORE TIME, ONE JUST NEEDS TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY, CONCENTRATE MORE ON THEIR HORSE: be with your horse!**

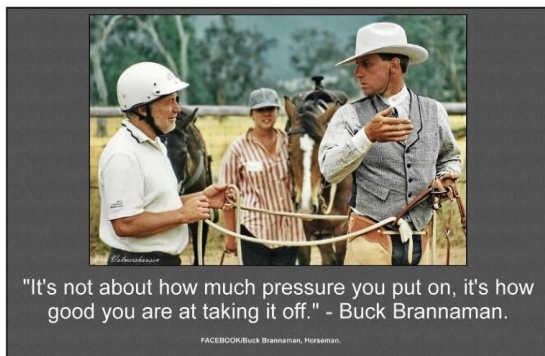
**It is working on us to develop better partnership with our horse by having better focus and competence.**

Now we get into subjects that will demand more time. It is well worth the time as definitely helps us build a connected and confident thus safer horse.

### **15- The horse must give in to pressure**

-When we talk of pressure we must look at it in terms of **“ FEEL”**, **NOT FORCE!** So, a phase 1 is a barely a touch. A light horse is such a pleasure to handle as we barely touch them and they respond willingly.

-When we ride, horses must give in to pressure of the leg or the hand as well as when we manipulate them, they must move and not push into their human. Horsemen teach their horses to give in to pressure everywhere in the body. Once when ponying Sheherazade on the trail, she passed on the wrong side of a tree. I let the lead line go and could not reach the top of her halter, so I pulled on the mane and she came up right away. As one of my mentors Pierre Plouffe who started her said to me *“I taught her to give into pressure everywhere”*.



**PRESSURE MOTIVATES** but it is the **RELEASE THAT TEACHES!**  
**20% pressure, 80% RELEASE**

**2 VERY IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:**

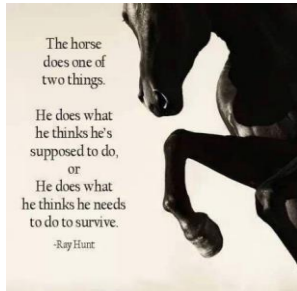
- **ZERO BRACE** in the horse
- **LEADER DOES NOT MOVE HIS FEET.**

-In regards to pressure, horses are moved either by touch or their bubble. Horses innately push into pressure as it is the only way they can get rid of the teeth or claws of a predator. Everything we do with them involves giving into pressure.

-We must then teach them to give in to pressure by using phases and **RELEASE as soon as horse responds**. All horsemen remind us of the importance of using phases otherwise we get a “dull” horse as asking, asking with the same strength is like **nagging**. The best example of this is when people ask for a back-up. We hear “*back, back, back, back,*” in the same tone and finally get an answer. No phases and no release when the horse does back up as people go right away go to their program. The horse needs time to integrate the new learning.

Horsemen remind us that it is an **immense vote of confidence** for the horse to give into pressure as it is **TOTALLY against their nature**, as they must innately push into the predators to get some release and get out of the teeth or claws.

It’s very important for us to be accurate as well as learn to release as our instinct is to hold on either the lunge or the reins. Horses are **very compliant** but they are at times not understanding us as when they give the right answer, release does not always come.



### A) TOUCH (porcupine)

-Humans use constant or rhythmic pressure with the leg when we ride as well as when they ask the horse to move from touch, what Pat Parelli calls the porcupine.

-Phases in the porcupine consist of pressure

- Hair
- Skin
- Muscle
- Bone

-The timing of the release is most IMPORTANT. Also let it soak in. We are very often too fast.

-Porcupine on the poll is very important as when horse is tense, we ask him to lower his head either on the poll with our fingers or on the lead line which puts the pressure on the poll. We must make sure to be relaxed, breathing slowly and our body relaxed.

-Giving to pressure on the poll is very important as when riding on the trail for example if your horse is a bit tense, you can ask for the lowering of the head with a porcupine on the poll. Then the endorphins kick in. Get at it fast as if horse very tense, the poll is as rigid as a rock. Confidence building is of extreme importance for a safe horse.

-When **we teach, we go slowly** between each phase and when the horse is educated and we want to refine, we must go **faster** between the phases otherwise we get the horse **dull**.

-The best way to get a horse dull

- Still ask when the horse has responded.
- Do not increase your phase when the horse does not answer. The best example is when I hear so often people asking their horse, **back, back, back, back**, with the same tone and no or slow response from the horse.

There is **CONSTANT** pressure and **RYTHMIC PRESSURE**

When a horse is dull, slow to respond we can use **rhythmic pressure alternating with constant pressure to use less pressure.**

So, for CONSTANT PRESSURE with the TOUCH

Phase 1-Hair

Phase 2-Skin

Phase 3- Muscle

Phase 4-Bone

And to keep from putting immense pressure on the bone when horse is slow, heavy or dull, you can use RYTHMIC PRESSURE with the touch

Phase 1- Hair constant pressure

Phase 2- Hair rhythmic pressure

Phase 3- Skin constant pressure

Phase 4- Skin rhythmic pressure

Rhythmic pressure does help us use less pressure but it is not always good to use on a right brain reactive horse as it can tend to get him more nervous.

DO NOT RELEASE UNTIL HORSE RESPONDS.

**LET IT SOAK IN.** Chris Cox and Lyne Laforme explain this concept very well. Lyne says “*make sure to give time to the horse to mentally digest the exercise by rewarding his good response by a long release.*”

***20% pressure, 80% release.***”

Soaking is the prolongation of the release phase.

**DO NOT GO TOO FAST.**

You apply pressure on

- the poll to lower the head
- the lead line to lower the head
- each side of the nose for the leg on the same side to back up
- on each side of the chest for the leg on the same side to back up
- on the cheek for the head to turn
- on the cheek with one hand and the other hand on the shoulder to move the shoulder. Once the horse has learned to respond to pressure on the shoulder with the help of the hand
- the shoulder **without** the hand on the cheek. Horses have 60% of their weight I front so to move the shoulders is more demanding than the hindquarters

- on the hindquarters for disengagement of the hind end
- on the ribcage for sideways
- on the tail for back up

Then using your rope, you can

- place it behind a front leg and ask for the leg to lift up
- place it behind a back leg for the leg to lift
- around the chest for the horse to come towards you
- around the butt for the horse to come forward

### **B) the BUBBLE** (the “drive” and the “draw”)

-The horse has 2 bubbles

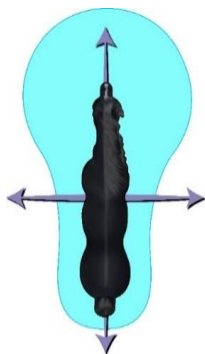
- Confidence bubble:** that is the distance the horse is comfortable for the human to touch him. Some horses have a huge confidence bubble: it takes time for them to feel at ease being petted by someone they do not know. As well, usually less confident to be petted in the face than on the body.
- Influence bubble:** the distance we must be to have an influence on the bubble. The more educated the horse, the bigger the distance we can have to influence him. The less educated will need us to be close to move the bubble.

-What is called the “drive” and the “draw” that is for the horse to move without you touching him but influencing his bubble.

-Away from you with the “drive” and towards you with the “draw”.

-Move hindquarters, shoulders, head, go sideways and even back up with phases in your energy; always looking for the lightest phase possible.

-The horse’s bubble is larger in front than in the back. In the saddle it is easier to move the shoulders than the hindquarters, on the ground it is the opposite.





**You do not attempt the drive until you have a very solid porcupine.**

**Do not attempt the draw until you have a solid drive.**

Three examples of the draw:

- a) Backwards with the draw from the hand or the stick and leader by shoulder.



Aspirationrecul.MOV

- b) Draw the hindquarters towards the leader with horse's head to the wall and leader by the shoulder. For some horses it is easier to teach with the horse parallel to the wall as long as we can control the forward and the backward movements.

- c) Sideways along poles, first in straight lines then with poles at a 90-degree angle.



Aspirationpôles.MOV

Do not forget to use phases with the stick to influence the bubble.

One must have a horse that respects your territory to succeed in this as well as a solid porcupine and drive.

## **16. Respect & leadership**

A very important concept in terms of leadership. When we look at a large herd of horses, they follow the **LEAD mare** and not the **DOMINANT** stallion. So, our role is to be like the lead mare who is more experienced, more knowledgeable and guides the herd in a gentle manner. This does not mean the lead mare tolerates everything and does not reprimand a bad behavior. The lead mare does educate the herd.

Lyne Laforme says, a good leader helps the others to become better, to improve, to attain their goals.

- Who pushes who? Who makes the other move his feet?
- A good leader **DOES NOT MOVE HIS/HER FEET and MOST IMPORTANT DOES NOT BACK UP, nor back his shoulders.**
- Claiming your territory: how to use your “*chi*” to influence the horse's drive lines and claim your territory.
- Balance between leadership & relationship: FOOD FOR THOUGHT!
- Causes of loss of leadership: human is fearful of horse, human cannot say “*no*” to the horse, human cannot set limits. They often think their horse will not love

them if they set limits. It is the contrary, as the horse knows what is expected and he feels safer. He also gets **release thus comfort and peace.**

- Correction vs leadership: correction does not necessarily tell the horse what the expected behavior is but more or less the human shouts to the horse something like “*quit it, stop it, no-no*”. The leader will guide the horse to the expected response and reward the try by a **RELEASE!** **Release is extremely important** and it is done with the appropriate body language: turn your belly button away, aiming it the ground, soft eyes, do not look at your horse.
- One of the times we see correction instead of leadership is when people “make” their horse stand still at the mounting block. Week, after week, this is not the best way to teach the horse the desired behavior: a good example of **CONTROL OVER COMMUNICATION.** In this case we must also ask ourselves why the horse does not want to be ridden.... That opens a huge can of worms.....

### **Leader or boss?**

Not always easy to see and understand the immense difference between these 2 concepts. Especially when the boss using a dominant model is not a severe one, many times gentle but it does not teach the desirable behavior but it **MAKES** the horse adopt the desirable behavior.



**To teach the desirable behavior, there has to be a rest moment after the behavior is adopted so the horse understands that he gave the right answer to the demand. That is the horse's reward! **RELEASE.****

**Chris Cox** reminds us to let it **SOAK IN.**

**Lyne Laforme** reminds us **20% pressure, 80% release.**

A world of difference as with a boss the horse adopts the behavior by **obedience.** An obedient horse does not always get release when the good behavior is adopted as right

away the boss asks to repeat it or continues on another task. The horse becomes obedient as often the only way to get peace is to adopt the behavior.

Personally, I want a ‘yes’ horse that does it by **willingness, cooperation**. The first time I sat on my mare Indy at the Cardinal ranch in B-C, we were playing online on the ground and Indy went to the side of the arena and parked herself there. I could not understand what I had done in my body language to send her there.

The breeder said to me ‘*she is inviting you to sit on her*’

My response ‘*without a saddle, bridle, helmet?*’

Her response: ‘*Do you think she will harm you if she invites you?*’

That sure made me understand the concepts of partnership, cooperation and willingness. So, I went to the side of the arena, mounted Indy and never had a single moment of fear. We walked all over the arena and she took me back to where I had mounted. It was indeed a passenger game as I did not ask her anything.



With the leader, one establishes a conversation where the horse has his say and that is extremely important as we do not listen to our horses. They have lots to say.

The leader is gentle, **DOES NOT MOVE HIS FEET**, but is effective as the horse gets a **RELEASE** as soon as the behavior is adopted and a rest period to digest the information and understand that that was the good answer.

**Not enough time given to soaking concept, that is giving time to the horse to retain the learning, think about it. We go too fast when training our horses.**

As they say the leader

**Knows the way**

**Shows the way**

**Goes the way**

As we said earlier, the **LEADER INSTILLS CONFIDENCE**  
the **BOSS INSTILLS FEAR**

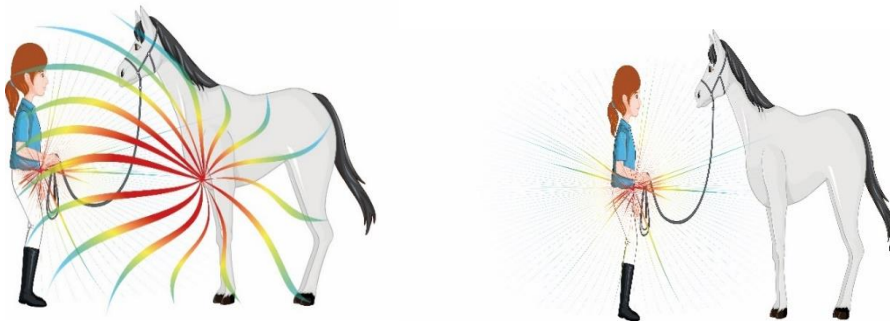
So it is our responsibility to develop our leadership to develop our horse.

Where people have difficulty with leadership versus boss is that they do not always realize that the leader's body language is **QUIET BUT VERY EFFECTIVE**.

The leader is a **BRICK WALL**: a brick wall does not have a voice to ask, ask, ask again nor arms to move around; the brick wall is a **sturdy fixture that does not move nor talk**. It is just there.

So, the person who is like a **FEATHER**, a **MARSHMALLOW** must just learn to stand quietly and firmly on the ground and that is sufficient to show the horse that there is a wall not to pass. It is very difficult for gentle persons as they think that the horse will not like them, but we know that the horses appreciate people that have better body language that gives them clear guidelines, thus guidance.

Of course, this is not learned in a day and mostly is not taught regularly.



Diagrams: the human usually has a weak "chi" compared to his horse and the horse will claim his territory. The leader must have a big energy, quiet and **NOT MOVE HIS FEET**.



The more the leader uses his belly button, thus his longitudinal “drive line” appropriately, the better educated becomes the horse.

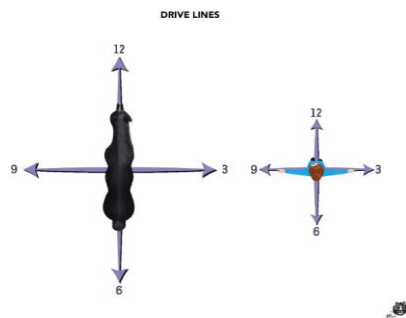
This is not visible to the human but definitely is for our horse. They “*feel*” our energy and feed of it.

The leaders’ feet must be very grounded, anchored to the soil as this gives a lot of confidence to the horse.

Good leaders are calm, grounded and seem to be just there but the horse definitely feels the difference and will naturally tend to follow the **good leader as he inspiring.**

## **17. The importance of the DRIVE LINES**

A very important concept when handling horses is that it is our body position that tells our horse where to stand thus no need to pull on the lead. We either activate our drive lines or decrease our “*chi*” to let the horse pass a drive line.



-The horse and human each have two drive lines. Think of a clock, thus the longitudinal (12-6) and lateral (3-9) drive lines. Horses communicate with each other by their drive lines and their buttons.

-The drive lines extend further than the body as shown in diagram above so we can influence the drive lines not touching the horse.

- Pressure applied in front of the lateral drive line drives the horse back. So when you come into the arena or the barn and turn to face your horse your body is asking him to stop not to come forward. It's the same when you ask your horse to come out of the stall, you must decrease your “*chi*” and not block his lateral drive line thus turn to face same direction as your horse. Often the human pulls on the lead or the reins as the horse does not advance. You just need to change your body position and walk facing the direction they want your horse to go.

- Pressure applied in the back of the lateral drive line drives the horse forward. We see it in the paddock when the horse behind drives the horse in front of him.
- Pressure applied to the longitudinal drive line drive stops the horse right away and a “*don’t hit the fan*” stops a horse real FAST. So when your horse pulls you, instead of trying to control the rope, just CUT THE DRIVE LINE! This does not touch your horse and is VERY effective and easy on your hands. It also helps to keep your horse light as there is no pull on the lead.
- Horses should not cross our drive lines unless human decreases his “*chi*” to let horse pass or turns to give way to the horse.

### **18. Playing online with our horse, not only lunge**

Now that we have established good communication with our horse it is time to advance into playing online.

Online is not only lunging, it’s all the exercises we can do with our horse on a 12 foot, then 22 foot and even a 45-foot line which leads us to long lining as well as liberty.

Most often when we don’t ride and do groundwork/play we end up lunging our horse because that is what we most often see people do. Ground work involves much more than lunging, not that lunging is not good but we can expand connection with more responsibilities given to our horse. As Lindsey Partridge says, often “*traditional lunging can cause a horse to disconnect*”

What do I want to teach my horse when on the ground?

A few basic exercises before getting to lunge.

The first exercise is to have the horse **FOLLOW A FEEL** on the lead and **SYNCHRONIZE** with our feet. So, the horse must be connected to his human as the human stops, walks faster, slower, trots and can even canter. The horse is constantly in sync with the human. A **solid** porcupine on the poll as well as on the lead line is important as I want my horse to be **SOFT**.

- This is an important concept as horseman say people tend to do things without being very connected and we end with a horse that is like **DOPE on the ROPE!**
- Do not just walk in straight lines but do your **PATTERNS** (see section on patterns) such as
  - weave cones even if imaginary cones
  - rectangles and squares, changing the size of the figure
  - sideways against the wall and then on centerline
  - also change sides of the horse, useful for the sentinel concept also. We tend to handle our horses from the left side only.

- During these figures the horse must give in to the human's shoulders when we do our 90 turns. If we turn towards the horse he must leave us the space and when we turn away from him he must turn towards us. When we turn our shoulders we either open or close our longitudinal drive line and that affects our horse by either giving him space or pushing his drive line.
- Sideways against the wall is an excellent exercise as it addresses the horse's shoulders which are more difficult to move than the hindquarters.
- All exercises with the "drive" and the "draw" such as Lindsey Partridge's boomerang, Pat Parelli's yo-yo, circling vs lunging, short and long range sideways, squeeze, falling leaf pattern.
- **Gabi Neurohr's 99 challenges** has a section on the ground and at liberty with many exercises with poles placed in different patterns. An excellent and inexpensive program considering the amount of content.
- **Lindsey Partridge** also has affordable programs such as the **7 days to better partnership, Building confidence, Secret to liberty.**
- How about the "touch it" pattern. At first, I touch the object I want my horse to touch and gradually progress to pointing the object and increasing the distance.



- This is really useful on the trail when a horse is worried about something as he has learned that when I ask him to "touch it" it is safe.
- And the "BACK UP": at first the horse follows our feet and when more educated just backing up our shoulders and the horse backs his shoulders thus backs up. A good thing to have a CODE for the back up and other movements.  
**Important: a code or word means just one thing.** The best example for this on the trail when a person is a bit worried as horse is too fast do not say "whoa" as "whoa" means stop, not slow down. Riders often say "easy" which is better than "slow" as it resembles the "whoa" a bit too much.
- The human must have **FOCUS** and also be connected to his horse as soon as we disconnect, talking to someone we lose our horse. The hand touch is used to reconnect when we are on the ground. In the saddle it can be a touch on the neck or to name the horse.



- The “**whoa**” is essential to teach from the start all the time. As Andy Booth says, it is **NOT NEGOTIABLE This is such an important concept and it does not take more time** as we practice it all the time when we are with are with our horse whether walking from the paddock, in the alley in the barn or in the arena.
- The **LUNGE**. To lunge is fine as there is a lot to learn doing so but we must also ask ourselves **what is our purpose and what do we want to teach when lunging our horse**. Once the horse knows the basic rules of lunging, we must engage their minds by enlarging, decreasing the size of the circles, transitions as well as moving circles to have the horse connected to his leader.
- We should lunge our horse with the **rope halter under the bridle** so we can then draw the horse to change the side of the circle instead of the leader going to the horse on the circle. When the horse passes by our second shoulder it is the moment to **DRAW** and then **DRIVE THE SHOULDERS** so he changes sides of the circle.
- This makes us work on the **DRIVE** as it is with our **energy that we drive** the horse back on his circle.
- Once we had a good **DRIVE**, we can use it to enlarge the circles by driving the shoulders out and the hindquarters if they don't follow suit.
- Stand in the middle without moving and have your horse maintain gait and direction. You can also walk down the middle line of the arena from A to C and have the horse maintain his circle. When the horse gets by your second shoulder it is time to advance a bit and the horse maintains the size of the circle.
- Back up between 2 poles, then 4 poles, then 2x2 at a 90 degrees angle.
- Side pass over a pole or two, then 2 poles set at 90 degrees angle so you must disengage the hindquarters for the 90 degree turn which is a turn on the forehand.
- Then sideways over 2 poles set at 90 degrees angle for a turn on the haunches.

One of the horsemanship principles that is often forgotten when people lunge circle after circle is the **RELEASE** when something very well done. We do not need to repeat forever.

**PRESSURE MOTIVATES** but it is the **RELEASE** that **TEACHES**.

## **20% PRESSURE, 80% RELEASE**

This is very hard to do in the course of a lesson as we feel we must continue and continue even if whatever exercise the horse did was the **BEST EVER! FOOD FOR THOUGHT!** How about changing exercise after a pause.

The question is **what do I want to teach my horse** when I lunge?

- Good round circles, I agree but how many do we need to do? 20 minutes of circles?

- Our horse should learn to **maintain gait and direction** and not need to be directed all the time. Thus, at times we stand in the middle and **do not move our feet** nor look at the horse but give him the responsibility of maintaining his gait and direction. This is important as we when go on a trail lets say we ask for a gait the horse maintains it until I ask for a change. And we do not need to use more aids once it is asked. Interestingly, you will notice that when your horse is behind your back he will often stop, change gait or change speed. I want to give responsibility to my horse to maintain gait without my intervention.
- **Maintain the circle** thus if I walk on a straight line across the arena the horse maintains the same size circle around me.
- Enlarge the circle by **driving** the shoulders out. I remember a good horseman some time back yelling ‘‘ PUSH, PUSH, PUSH’’ as the horse was coming into the circle. The DRIVE is very important.
- Keep a ‘‘ **float in the rope**’’ thus on the lunge.
- Change the direction not by going to the horse and changing the side of the lunge but by **DRAWING the horse in towards you when he passes your second shoulder DRIVE him back out on the circle.** The drive and draw being important concepts when playing online.
- Sideways against the wall is an excellent exercise. When you change direction, the leader must be fast to change the stick from hand and address the other shoulder.



Sideways, squeeze,  
sideways.MOV

- To have a good drive and draw it starts with a good porcupine everywhere on the body. This makes for the horse light to the aids when we ride. Pressure is either by the touch (porcupine) or the bubble (drive). Teach touch before bubble.
- Having the horse **lift his back** up by addressing under the belly at a distance with the crop when lunging.
- The ever important ‘‘ **whoa**’’ is also taught online with either the word or another cue. What I want to teach my horse when online will transfer to the saddle.
- How about the horse’s **gait in tune with our body position** thus

Humans body position	Horse’s weight distribution	-Horse’s gait
-Shoulders forward	-60% forehand,40% hindquarters	-Walk
-Shoulders over spine	-50/50	-Trot
-Shoulders back	- 40% forehand, 60% hind	-Canter

- Once you have a good sideways along the wall why not try it down the middle line of the arena.

- Jumping different objects such as barrels.
- How about a half jump over a barrel?
- And do not forget different “**squeeze**” exercises with barrels, noodles and different objects. You want to gradually decrease the width, increase the height on the sides, decrease the height if under something. And do not forget the back-up. More on this subject in no. 9 HABITUATION in the Confidence building strategies section.
- And of course, all the “**work in hand**” that dressage riders do is online work. Online our horse follows our shoulders for shoulder in, shoulder out as well as our pelvis for renvers/travers.
- How about a half pass, side pass and leg yield?
- Of course, the good backup with the horse picking up his feet well and equal diagonal pairs together.



World famous Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling on work in hand.

- Video of Indy doing a travers on 3 tracks, then 4 tracks, back to 3 tracks and a side pass.



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## **CONFIDENCE building strategies**

-In French much more on [blog.lynelaforme.coach](http://blog.lynelaforme.coach) under **BÂTIR LA CONFIANCE**, 16 articles on Confidence building: 150 pages of text. Also, in the serie APPROFONDIR NOTRE COMMUNICATION “*Votre cheval explose, mord, rue... pourquoi? Quels sont les éléments déclencheurs?*”

These articles in Powerpoint format are in a 455 slide document sold 25\$ on [formationequestresenligne.com](http://formationequestresenligne.com). The PowerPoint document on “*Évitons l’empilement des éléments déclencheurs en écoutant mieux notre cheval*” is free under FORMATIONS GRATUITES.

-Let us not forget, horses are prey and when they fear something it is for REAL. There is a saying that

*- Horses are scared of everything that moves.*

*- Horses are also scared of everything that does not move.*

-Nothing is done in arena or elsewhere before the horse gives his OK that he **feels safe** there so one needs to remember where the sweet spot is, the danger zone (what horse perceives as dangerous) as well as the comfort/effort concept.

-Thus relaxed, head low.

-Be careful as some introverted horses may seem relaxed as they do not move their feet, tend to freeze instead of flight.

-Once horse is comfortable, we can ask him to concentrate on a task.

- If a stimulus happens to be in the arena or elsewhere, make sure we are using the “sweet spot”, comfort/effort concepts as well as the approach/retreat/reapproach strategies.

The less you shield your horse from seeing many different obstacles, toys, tarps, things that move and/or make noise, the less you get a insecure horse.

### **1. Sweet spot concept**

-Very important. A horse is not asked to concentrate on work unless he is in his sweet spot as then you control the emotions with the hands/reins or lunge.

**The horse’s control box of the feet (the mind and emotions) is so much stronger than our 2 hands.**

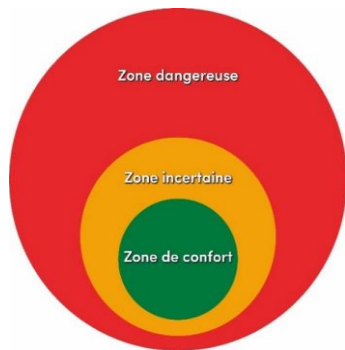


Diagram: How horse perceives arena, comfort zone being by the door entering the arena.

- If you want to know if your horse feels safe in the arena for example, ask him to put his nose on the wall in different parts of the area, starting with the sweet spot and working to the end. The “*touch it*” pattern is good for this exercise.

-Then ask him to put his ribcage parallel to the wall, starting with the left side as many horses have a bit of “right eye” issue. Start in the “sweet spot” and gradually go further.

Read his body language, often as you go further away from the door, the horse’s butt is often inside the track when you ask him to put his body parallel to the wall. That tells you the horse is not too confident having his butt there. Normal as his butt is 6 feet behind the eyes.



-Photo: Timber placed himself like this before Laura and Rebecca helped him be more confident in the far end of the arena which at that time was not his “sweet spot”. He is now able to put his tail against the wall everywhere in the arena and often does when free in the arena as if to show us he is now comfortable in those spots.

-We then must retreat to a “*sweet spot*” and reapproach a bit.

-Never increase the difficulty before having it SOLID where you are now stage. Horsemen VERY ANIMATE about this concept. We do not ask more of a horse until he is confident and solid on the last task or previous step.

-Eventually you will be able to do this everywhere in the arena.

Then start the process over with the tail to the wall, starting at entrance going further towards the end. Do same outside when you go out, such as outside barn walls, outside arena walls, fences etc

-This is not done in one session but **until a horse is completely safe in arena or elsewhere NOTHING IS ASKED OF HIM.** I know I'm stirring the pot but such an important concept to build a confident horse. A confident horse is a safe horse, a happier horse as not fearful and thinking of constant evasion.

-The concept is called ‘**association to positive**’, that is what the horse perceived as somewhat dangerous is now a sweet spot: there is a **change of perception** about a spot.

- So, to respect the above 2 concepts if we lunge our horse in the arena and he is not confident there we should lunge by the door and go have a beer at the other end.

-Not practical when other riders or a lesson going on but we are not building a confident horse by asking him to move his feet in an area he is not confident. Some horses are still not at ease at the other end after a few years of arena riding.

When things do not work that well maybe we **should change our strategy?**

**DO NOT TEACH ANYTHING NOR ASK ANYTHING OF YOUR HORSE WHEN HE IS NOT IN HIS SWEET SPOT.**

-When horses are stressed there is a **DISCONNECTION BETWEEN MIND AND BODY, the body is here but the mind is elsewhere.**

**NO MIND, NO COMMUNICATION WITH THE FEET!**

-Very important to take the time for them to reconnect. This happens often in separation anxiety or when a horse does not feel safe in the environment and yes that can very well happen in the arena. Many horses are not comfortable in the arena if no other horse and do not show that much anxiety as they are moving their feet. They do not feel comfortable at all to stand by the walls of the arena, calmly at the other end; the high head carriage attests to that fact. And do not ask them to put their tail on the wall at the other end of the arena until they are VERY relaxed.

-Leader must then use different patterns not only lunging to help the horse connect with him and not the other horses. Be careful not to use patterns that get the horse so busy he is not thinking; go slow but have horse concentrate on leader. See section 6 on patterns.

## 2. Comfort/effort concept; very important

-**Never ask a horse to work in a place he is not confident**; work on relaxation and confidence then ask him to work otherwise you are teaching to MOVE HIS FEET WHEN UNCONFIDENT. As I always tease my friends “*don't ask me to go on a trail with you if that is what you taught your horse, move those feet when he's scared*”.

### ***Teach your horse to think before moving his feet***”.

-Make the wrong decision harder than the right decision so have the horse work in his sweet spot and then reapproach the scary area and do nothing. NEVER TO PUNISH A HORSE. Remember doing nothing is an action. This is the **comfort/effort, no comfort/no effort** concept. This is what is called the “**association to positive**” concept that is what was scary becomes interesting.

-After a winter riding in the arena in the Spring, work your horse in the arena and go graze your horse, not lunge him, outside. Otherwise, we are teaching him, when you do not feel confident all you need to do is move your feet.

-When your horse's head is high ask him to lower it to encourage endorphin release by

- a) porcupine on the poll
- b) porcupine on the lead rope which applies pressure on the poll
- c) hand touch

## 3. The sentinel concept

When leading if human is in front, he is the sentinel; usually it is a shared job as we often lead our horse from the shoulder thus co-sentinel.

-In the no. 13 of the “how to” section, the sentinel concept was treated for the human's safety that is the human between the danger and the horse so that if your horse moves it will be away from what he perceives as dangerous. This way the horse does not knock you over.

-The aim is eventually not to have to think of the sentinel concept as over the years you have developed a confident horse as **you made sure to expose your horse with the appropriate strategies to every possible thing you can imagine. This makes for a SAFE horse!**



-Now in terms of confidence building in our horse.

-Which of the partners leads?

- o Human in front, human leads and is the sentinel.



Photo: Indy at Liberty at Horse Lovers weekend at Upper Canada Village: synchronism and relaxation present. I am in between being in front and at the shoulder but I can say we share the sentinel job. Indy did the parade at liberty in this position. My focus is very important for Indy to go straight as she enjoys visiting with people. I then change my focus for her to visit.

- o Indy and I are co-sentinels as Indy getting off the suspension bridge at Horseland.



- o Horse is the sentinel



Photos: On the left Indy is the sentinel, the first time she sees the crocodile in the water at Horseland. She is thus safe to be ridden by this beast.

On the right Indy is between leader and monster. The noisy machine blowing out confetti is on the ground **right beside her on her left** and I am on the right. She did not move her feet; her head a little high as photographer was talking to us to get the photo. Otherwise, her head was lower and she felt safe.

-When on the ground if you can be behind where you sit in the saddle, the horse is the sentinel. If he is relaxed, he is ready to be ridden in that area This is like long lining; you do not need 2 reins but human must be behind where we sit in the saddle so horse is the leader. This gives us information on how confident the horse is in that situation. If relaxed, he will be the same in the saddle unless the rider is nervous. As horsemen say *"the horse is the rider's mirror"*.

-It's very important to have the horse lead when much stimuli, before you ride. In extreme cowboy, mountain trail horsemanship clinics, we are not allowed to ride until we have proven that our horse is confident with all the obstacles. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of **long lining** concept when taking your horse elsewhere than the usual arena or ring.



Photos: Indy being long lined at Horse Lovers weekend at Upper Canada Village. If she is calm and confident with me in the back of her exploring the village, she is ready to be ridden as on foot I am behind where I sit in the saddle, thus Indy is the sentinel. After this exercise Indy was ridden bridleless in the village all alone during visitors' hours as well as during the parades. Head low is a relaxed horse not a "dull" horse although they look dull, she is THERE 100% with me. Her ears are towards me. On the right, this is the first time Indy sees this covered bridge at Horseland. She explored it as the sentinel and I rode her safely in it on a loose rein as she was well prepared

-When you use the approach/retreat/**reapproach** patterns the sentinel concept must be taken into consideration.

-In a horsemanship clinic you do not have permission to sit on a horse until you and your horse can do this, that is the horse is the sentinel, thus confident in the new area.

Why? Comfort/effort concept

You NEVER ask a horse to work if he is not confident in that place.

-Oh boy I am again stirring the pot but that is what horsemen teach.

I have been to numerous clinics where some riders never got on their horse; everything done on the ground as the horses were not confident. We never blame the horses but HELP them build their confidence with the appropriate strategies.



Photos: Indy at Horseland. On the left, she is VERY relaxed as the sentinel on this small bridge, she then negotiated it safely when ridden. On the right if Indy negotiates this obstacle alone I can sit safely on her back to negotiate it. I was on the ground just pointing her where to go.

#### **4. Relaxation**

-**Extremely important** to help the horse be on **endorphin** and not adrenalin thus poll no higher than the wither. Three ways to ask the horse to lower his head:

- Porcupine on the poll
- Porcupine on the lead line
- The hand touch



Photo: Fawn Anderson of Classical Natural Vaquero, one of my mentors, demonstrating relaxation on a horse while in a Horsemanship clinic in Costa Rica. The horses were being prepared for a week-long trip and they all needed to be relaxed and confident.

All the while the leader's feet must be well grounded and our body in a relaxed state.

-Relaxation: **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT**. This is the **most important concept to achieve as a relaxed horse can think, participate, follow a lead and mostly be safe**. Relaxation is often overlooked and obtained by micromanaging when in the saddle; that is not a good way to do it. Horsemen do not sit on their horse until it is relaxed. In many clinics I have followed you needed the permission of the clinician to sit on your horse when he/she assessed that your horse was relaxed in the new environment.

To incite endorphin release it is important to **scratch the wither at times, quite strongly** as light touch does not always bring relaxation. When you see horses scratch each other with their teeth they go with strength. Some authors say that caressing/stroking the wither area is, at times, more tonifying than relaxing and does not always help the horse become less emotional. In some instances, such as when the horse is not highly stressed, stroking does reduce their cardiac rhythm especially if joined with calming voice.



fjords (2).MOV

**-Horse's head is low, low and they are on a loose rein. Contact is not used to control the horse but to communicate with the horse's feet.**

**-Right eye issues:** always start with the left eye seeing what is scary as it is a braver eye.

-Also start with the nose before the tail as the tail is far behind the horse's eyes and it is not a comfort zone for most horses.



Photos: Indy's poll is no higher than her wither. She is not asleep, she is connected and very light to the aids and attentive. There are 3,000 visitors during the parade and she must stop often and wait so she has to be connected and to be connected she must be relaxed.

In the picture on the right, my focus as well as my left arm, thus shoulder, tells her where to look: mimicry. If I put my arm to the left this gives her permission to visit. The unicyclist was turning around us in the parade and the huge 6 horse carriage with all the bells was right behind us. This is an advanced horse in terms of relaxation with tons of stimuli.

**A few signs of relaxed vs tense horse**

	Confident horse, relaxed, parasympathic in action, endorphin release	Unconfident horse, worried, sympathetic in action: adrenalin, cortisol release
Reactions	Slow Deliberate	Fast. Reactive Survival mode
Tendency	Stop, push on leader, easily bored Seems stubborn at times	Tries to get away, to avoid stimuli Tendency to catatonia

Leader	Must be creative, interesting and able to stimulate curiosity, interest	Must be calm, constant, attentive and seem solid like a pillar
Head	Low head carriage	High head carriage, poll higher than wither
Eyes	Soft, eyelids move	Wide open, does not cling much, avoids looking at leader and sometimes seems absent (catatonia)
Ears	Supple and relaxed, pointing in front, focuses well	Tense, often shaking. Seem to look to evade stimuli
Chin & jaw	Relaxed: lips are supple Flehmen reflex Yawns often Might have tendency to bite	Tense lips and chin Grinds teeth Foams at the mouth Displaced mouth behavior
Nostrils	Supple	Flared, sniffs often
Neck	Topline is relaxed Under the neck is supple	Topline is tense Under the neck muscles tense
Ribcage	Ribcage is mobile and breathing is regular	-Breathing is rapid and superficial, Tense ribcage

## 5. Passenger game

Pat Parelli has this concept in his program. The technique consists of sitting on our horse and not asking him anything. WAIT, WAIT, WAIT until your horse decides to move. We must be patient as it might take ½ hour before he takes a first step and he then often stops more or less asking his rider “ *where do I go? Or what should I do?*”

This technique requires much patience from the rider but it sure gives us a lot of information on how the horse feels in the environment he’s in. Usually, the horse starts very gradually to explore and more interestingly it gives a lot of info on the places he wants to go as well as the ones he wants to avoid. Often horses that are not in their “sweet spot” will move to get to that spot and stop there... forever.....

When in the arena it can take many times to play the game for the horse to wander outside the arena and most often he’ll stop just outside the door.

So be patient, wait it out and gradually the horse will risk exploring maybe very slowly but he will gain confidence and that is extremely important. This **technique is demanding** as we are so accustomed to tell our horse what to do, where to go, gait and speed. When I first learned this many years ago it was with Poney. The first try in the arena it took him 22 minutes to move to the wall and there he stopped, turned and seemed to ask me “ *where do I go from here?*”. I waited and it took him 9 minutes before he moved. We worked with that concept for a long time until he ventured out the door of the arena and even explore. Interesting as when ridden before this if the arena door was opened he would go out real fast as too much hands made him very ill at ease and stressed.

This game can also be done on the ground. You do not ask the horse anything and WAIT, WAIT, WAIT. The only thing is you do not want him to eat grass but otherwise you do not interfere with what he is doing, unless of course, he's up to something dangerous such as going to step on a plank that has nails sticking out. The sentinel concept where the leader is behind where he sits in the saddle is good for this exercise as you do a double shot if I can call it so as the horse becomes the sentinel and the builds confidence outside his usual arena that is his "sweet spot".

When you travel with your horse it is a very interesting way to explore the new area your horse is in. The horse explores at his rhythm and confidence, the leader being in the back. Be neutral, do not ask the horse anything. I call it the "leading" game as it is the horse that calls the shots.

## **6. Patterns**

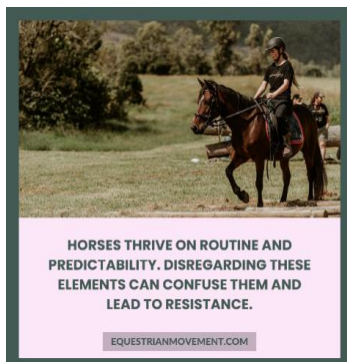
A very important concept about patterns. It takes a horse 4 to 7 times to integrate a pattern and the human somewhere around 21 times. Yes! Our minds are busy, always full and it takes us more time than our horse.

### **a) Patterns to keep**

-Once your horse has explored the arena, ring or elsewhere you can initiate patterns besides lunging as this develops connexion with the leader. We are then telling our horse that focus is on the leader as we do our patterns and **MAKE SURE THERE IS SOME CHAOS, STIMULI** around. Horsemen do not avoid stimuli but teach the horse to think before moving their feet. That is the "habituation" (despook) technique.

-A pattern is something that can be replicated in different places or situation.

-It is important to remember that horses are **NEOPHOBIC** thus are not at ease to change their routine, their ways of doing, too much change can create tension, confusion as well as resistance to do things.





-The purpose of different patterns is that the horse is connected to his leader who suggests what pattern, the size as well as how many times we do it.

- Rectangles
- Squares
- Voltes
- Half voltes
- Weave cones
- Figure 8's
- Clover leaf
- Falling leaf pattern
- Figures using a variety of pole patterns
- Sideways against the wall
- Sideways along the middle line of arena from A to C
- Back up patterns
- Squeeze patterns using jump standards, barrels, ball and arena wall



Photo: Squeeze pattern: horse pushes the ball around the red block while staying within the boundaries of the wooden structures.

**b) patterns (ways of doing) that we need to work on and change.**

**-DO NOT CREATE THE PATTERN: AVOID STIMULI.** To the contrary when there is chaos, let the horse look, ask him to lower his head and give him time to digest, wait for the "lick and chew". For most horses you might have to wait quite a long time but it will shorten the more you expose the horse and you are building confidence.

**-DOING NOTHING AT TIMES IS DOING A LOT TO BUILD CONFIDENCE as WELL as CONNECTION.** Just let the horse digest what is going on all the while staying calm, head low. We need to SLOW DOWN.





Wisdom from Neil Davies, Australian horseman.

-In real life when an obstacle is there it will not go away because the horse is fearful, thus every chance you have to show your horse something different builds experience and confidence as long as you do not PUSH the horse. Just stay there AND WAIT. When the hay truck comes to deliver hay, barn owner moving the manure with the tractor, the man taking manure away in his huge truck: these are opportunities to be on the ground with your horse using the proper confidence building strategies.

- If you enter the arena and there is something that the horse is fearful of it's very important. Do not go directly to object, zigzag, circle or rectangle exposing left eye first then right eye, increasing and decreasing circles as horse becomes calmer. Later bring horse to face the object, "touch it" with the nose, then approach the left ribcage, the right ribcage and finally the tail on the object. Be careful, the tail is a harder demand and make sure your horse is relaxed and not just obedient.

- Do not forget "right eye" issues and the sentinel concept.

-Patterns are very useful in developing our horses as they are confidence building; horses know what to expect. But some patterns such as always doing some things the same way, do not keep our horses connected., they become like a robot, going around aimlessly.

If the horse controls the pattern, the leader needs to change it to keep horse more connected. One of the best examples of this is horses that are taken out to the paddock and back to their stall by the staff. The pattern is always the same, the speed usually also; that's fine it is not the personnel's job to educate our horse. So, when you go get your horse or bring him back BE CAREFUL as most probably the horse will dictate the speed and rhythm. I remember Indy's breeder asking me if she would be handled by the personnel. I said "no" as she will be living 24/7 in a paddock. They liked that as with personnel the horse tends to be on the automatic button. It's OK, the staff need to get the job done.

- Relaxation patterns are **very important** in developing an emotionally fit horse.
- The "touch it" pattern, "do not touch it" pattern, "are good for confidence, building in your horse.
- The "corners" pattern for a horse that has no go or not much go. Stop at every corner of the arena; at times you might have a goodie on a barrel or some flat

surface. Then go to the other corner and so on. Once the horse moves nicely from one corner to the other corner, start skipping a goodie, one at a time and then start skipping a stop. Not the one closest to the entry/exit door. Then skip a second corner and so on until your horse is eager to move.

- Use of patterns when scary stimuli so horse learns to focus on his leader and not the stimuli thus squares, weaves, figure 8's, rectangles, zigzags with leader being the sentinel and then horse being the sentinel. Make sure that you do not go too fast and get the horse so busy in his mind that he cannot focus and think as we can micromanage doing patterns and that is not the aim.
- When riding patterns are also fun and help to stimulate the horse's interest as he gets to know what is coming up and participates. Patterns also have the benefit to improve our riding skills.

When handling our horse, it is important to **change the daily routine pattern** so the horse is connected and asking *'what's on the program today?'*. For example:

- Back up to get out of the stall, into the stall, in and out of arena or the barn.
- Change doors going in or out of the barn or the paddock, when feasible.
- Change the grazing pattern; do not always do the same pattern such as graze when riding done and not before or vice-versa. The element of surprise is important to keep horse connected otherwise you develop a 'robot', thus a horse that is not connected to his leader.
- Bring some change in your grooming routine such as start with the feet, clean the 4 feet from one side, do feet first or last etc
- Riding patterns in a group is also stimulating for a horse even a 'pas de deux'.



-Have something a little scary in the arena so horse learns to connect to human all the while seeing the foreign object. Importance of the position of the leader in each of those patterns as leader is the sentinel at first and then the horse.

-Start with exposing the left eye towards the monster, then the right eye.

### **-The ‘ touch it’ pattern**

-Ask the horse to touch with his nose a variety of objects in many different situations. At first we touch the object so the horse understands to do the same with his nose. As we progress we stand further and further away from the object, point it and ask the horse to go ‘touch it’.

-Then when the horse sees something a little scary, we try to encourage curiosity and ask the horse to ‘ touch it’ as it is safe.

-It’s important to change the objects that you ask the horse to touch otherwise he does not understand the concept. An acquaintance always asked her horse to touch my green ball in the arena and one day we realized that what we called a ball the horse thought of it as a ‘touch it’.

-Teach this pattern on the ground and then in the saddle.

When we progress with this pattern, we can think of asking our horse to put his ribcage starting with the left side, then the right by standing parallel to different obstacles or even the walls of the arena. A horse often will stand with shoulder close to the object and the hind legs further away as they are built long and it is harder for them to put the hind legs and the tail close. We saw that in the ‘ sweet spot ‘ concept.

It is however important not to use the words ‘ touch it’ as this is for the nose.

Once the horse is comfortable standing parallel to something, **only then can** we ask for the tail. Always remember about the **sweet spot concept**, that is the less a sweet spot, the slower we ask for progress to respect the **comfort/effort concept**.

### **-The ‘ do not touch it ‘ pattern**

-Unless it is something dangerous such as a wooden plank with nails where we must assure safety this pattern is not used much as most horses do not get to see much. But when you travel with your horse it is a useful pattern. a bit like when mom took us to a store with fragile items, she would say ‘ *look with your eyes, do not touch, if you break I’ll need to pay*’.

However it is very important **not to kill curiosity** in your horse.



Photo: Indy opening the parade on a cordeo. She is aware of all the people but must be focused on her job. Not always the time to visit ("touch it" concept) at times she has the permission to visit with the people. She paces herself as when she notices that she is "late in the parade" she stops visiting and increases her pace to catch up without ever trotting. This is giving my horse some responsibility.

## **7. Approach/retreat /REAPPROACH**

-It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** to **reapproach after a retreat even if just a tiny bit**, otherwise we are teaching our horse to go away from danger. I would not go out on a trail with you if that is what you teach your horse.

-Do not think of these patterns just in the arena: they are excellent to develop our horse to be confident going on a trail, clinics, obstacle courses etc.

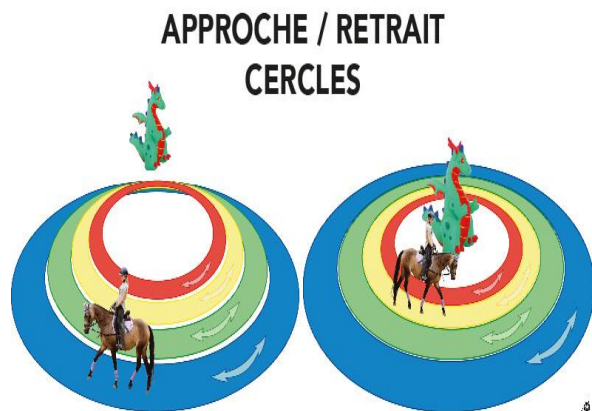
### **CIRCLES**

-Always start by exposing left eye to monster before right eye.

-Make circle big when horse not too confident and increase or decrease depending on confidence level of the horse.

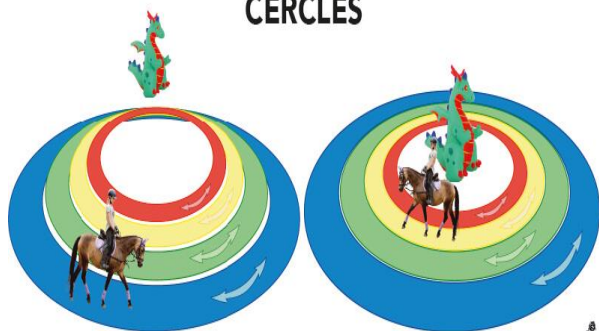
-Be careful not to ask a trot to fast as it is a way for the horse to get through the scary area fast. I do not want to teach that to my horse.

-Left eye exposure



-Right eye exposure

## APPROCHE / RETRAIT CERCLES



## ZIGZAGS

### APPROCHE / RETRAIT ZIGZAGS



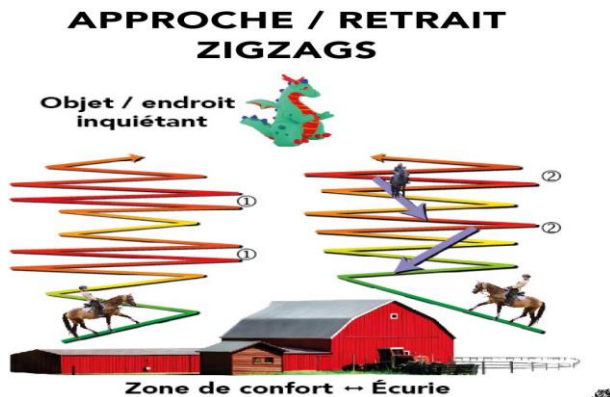
-Going straight to the trail, to the outside ring and at times to the end of the arena is not appropriate if the horse is not very confident. As you see with the above diagram, the less confident the horse is the longer and tighter the zigzags so the horse does not move rapidly towards what he perceives as the ‘monster’. The horse is also **looking 90 degrees** away from the perceived monster.

-The GREEN line is for a very confident horse.

-The YELLOW line is for a fairly confident but somewhat hesitant horse.

The RED line is for an unconfident horse so we keep the lines long and tight, barely moving toward the ‘monster’. It is a bit of an ‘on place’ movement going very slowly closer to the ‘monster’ but moving his feet from right to left. At times we stay on the same line with our horse as he is not confident of moving closer to the scary area.

-This technique as well as the circle are FUNDAMENTAL in developing a confident horse. Once again, to develop confidence we must expose our horse and not shield him from stimuli. A CONFIDENT horse is a SAFE horse.



-Diagram above: when a horse gets a little unconfident as in **no.1** you can make the lines longer and closer so that you are going slower towards the monster. You resume the pattern when the horse relaxes and is more confident.

In **no 2** you even go back to a more comfortable spot but do make sure to go towards the -monster again even if only a few inches **otherwise you are teaching the horse to go away when there is danger.**



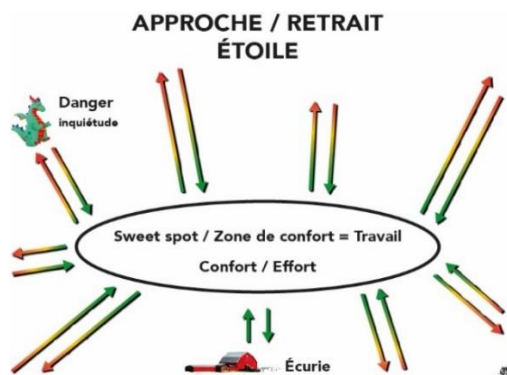
-If horse is really unconfident you abort your project then **go back to sweet spot and work. NEVER TO PUNISH** the horse but to help the horse associate the monster as something interesting, not scary. What we call in French **ASSOCIATION AU POSITIF**. We are change the horse's perception of the scary spot by using appropriate strategies.

-On the right is a strategy to use when a horse comes home to fast towards home or to the arena door. This works on the horse's mind instead of pulling on the reins to slow the horse down you do a **reverse zigzag**.

**-Do not forget your comfort/effort concept so we should work in the arena, go outside and graze and come back to work in arena or outside ring, wherever the horse is confident. VERY IMPORTANT!**

**Also VERY IMPORTANT NEVER TO PUNISH THE HORSE WHEN YOU GO BACK TO SWEET SPOT TO WORK.** The objective is to have the horse change his perception so that not only home is the sweet spot. In French we call that **ASSOCIATION AU POSITIF**, that is see positively what at one point you thought was scary.

### The STAR



-A very important concept. When we go out of the horse's comfort zone, go a little, come back to the sweet spot to work. This is good also when you go out of the arena, you might not be able to do a star pattern but you go out and come back in. When we return to SWEET SPOT, you always have the horse **WORK, NEVER TO PUNISH**.

- a) You work when you are in your sweet spot, I will not ask you to work if you do not feel safe.
- b) And you do nothing when you do not feel safe.



### An example with 2 horses

My Scandinavian barn owner lost her Norwegian fjord and decided to go get another one from that herd. The owner had passed away and left \$\$\$ to care for the herd that is bring hay & make sure no injuries. They had access to free water by a creek, had never been handled since the owner passed away many years ago. The male was castrated which surely did not give him the best impression of humans.

She came back with 2 as figured it would be too traumatic to take just one; at least they had each other. So, we started by making friends, being able to touch them, put a halter on, lead them, take them out to a square wooden paddock built in the big paddock. They learned to synchronize with our feet, follow a "feel" on the lead line, respect our territory as well as the essential verbal "whoa". We then introduced them to my mare Indy in the big paddock, got them accustomed to the electric fence, automatic water dispenser etc.

One day it was time to introduce them to having another horse besides Indy when we took them into the arena. My friend Lori Ann and her mare Cortado accepted to help. When Thor and Freya came in the arena and saw Cortado at the other end they were scared, stopped in their tracks, head high but did not make us move our feet.



A perfect opportunity to work on approach/retreat/reapproach strategy. We worked on our relaxation, breathing deep and slow, lowering our heads so they would mimic us. As when a horse is very tense, they do not give into pressure as well. We must use the hand touch, body mimic and very importantly our breathing to help them relax. Once they were relaxed, we started our approach/retreat/reapproach techniques such as the zigzags, the star as well as a few circles.

The result was quite good and at the end we were very close to Cortado, much closer than the photo. I even did some squeeze between the wall and Cortado, both left eye and right eye.



### **8. Avoid stacking of stimuli**

It's very important to avoid the stacking of stimuli without the proper relaxation after each stimulus otherwise the adrenalin levels have not gone down enough and the horse is more reactive.

After each stimulus, you want the horse to be VERY relaxed, head low and on endorphin. Otherwise, the horse is a bit cranked up and when faced with another stimulus the horse overreacts.

The example I often give is on a winter trail, the horse meets a few skiers and seems fine. Then a couple of skiers and still all seems good and at the third view of a single skier the horse overreacts to even a lesser stimulus, just ONE SKIER.

The reason, the stressometer never went down enough and the adrenalin stayed high after the first 2 encounters with skiers.

Another example is when a horse overreacts seeing my big green ball that is always on the right-hand corner of the arena for the past 25 years. The horses that are only ridden in the arena see it every time they come in and as long as it's in the corner tucked away, they are fine. But some days, some horses overreact at the sight of the ball. Every time the riders tell me their horse was nervous coming into the arena because of some stimulus outside such as the tractor pushing manure, the big truck delivering hay, whatever.

At that point one has to help the horse relax by lowering the head and having the endorphins kick in. This is not a concept that is usually taught to riders but SO IMPORTANT!

## **9. Habituation (despook)**

-A better way of thinking instead of the term desensitizing, think of a horse that is confident with a variety of stimuli. The horse is awake and alert but calm and relaxed. It is called **HABITUATION**. The horse becomes accustomed to different stimuli and no longer finds it unpleasant nor is he afraid of it; he might even be curious. This is nothing about desensitizing a horse, the **last thing I want is a horse that is not “there” between the 2 ears** which is often seen in introverted horses. I want a horse that is alert, curious and interested in exploring the stimuli when possible. If not, at least my horse is not scared of the stimuli.

-The **technique is extremely important** otherwise we are flooding the horses which gets them reactive or catatonic. Catatonic horses are often like a bomb ready to explode anytime without much warning.

-The more we expose our horse to different stimuli with appropriate strategies, the more confident they become thus, the **SAFER** they become. We observe more often that people avoid stimuli instead of developing their horse mentally and emotionally to have a safer horse.

- We must however respect the technique otherwise we flood our horse and that sure is not a confidence building strategy.

We must think of their **sight, hearing, touch and movement. Smell** is when horses travel a lot they get to see campfires, BBQ's and wild animals.

Taste is not really addressed.

It is also very important to think of the horse's body. Start with the stimulus in **front of the horse, we walk away with the stimulus so the horse follows it and the object does not get any closer**. This is good for objects like the hose, big ball, spray bottle etc.

When the horse is comfortable with the object moving with him, we can stop walking and ask the horse to *“touch it”* with his nose.

We then go to the **front feet, left side before right side, the hind feet, under the belly, above the body and behind**. Depending on your horse you will switch exposing the belly, above the horse or behind in the order your horse is most comfortable. Many horses have hind end (zone 5) issues of things behind them, others under the belly and many above them.

- Phases are used only when increasing the stimuli.
- No phases during a stimulus, equal movement, same equal speed like a metronome.

- Phases are used in the sense that one can increase the demands on the horse by having a stimulus that is more demanding such as higher speed, bigger, closer to the horse etc.
- Types of stimuli (visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory & movement).
- Importance of the area in regards to horse's body (above, under the belly, behind) as well as the distance from the horse. Many horses have issues with something under their belly, on top or behind them. Strategies exist to help these horses resolve their issues.
- **Develop curiosity.** When you first start exposing your horse to different stimuli when the horse shows interest in a stimulus, retreat the stimulus just a bit as a release of pressure. If it is a fixed stimulus, retreat the horse a bit. That is the reward for being curious.

-The MOST IMPORTANT: STOP THE STIMULUS WHEN THE HORSE STOPS HIS FEET. Ideally, I would like the horse not to get to moving his feet but at times they do and it is OK. Just stop the stimulus when the horse stops.

In developing our horse we always have in mind to teach him to THINK BEFORE HE MOVES HIS FEET!

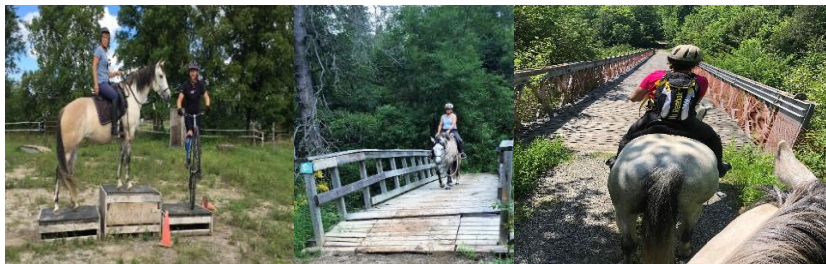
### Different stimuli

-Everywhere around the body especially in the back, over the head, under the belly.





**Put their feet** on something, especially the hind feet: tarps, empty plastic bottles, bridges, pedestals, water etc. Adress it from the front and then the back-up when appropriate.



**Face, follow, be followed** by something that moves and often makes noise



**-Pull something**



**Water:** for a trail horse, crossing water is often needed.



NB Middle photo: I always wear a helmet when I ride. This time on vacation we had taken our horses for a **VERY long walk on foot**. We were just about home when we encountered this small river. Indy had been **VERY calm all the way** so I sat on her to cross otherwise would have needed to do a **very long detour**.

**-Sound:** noise is an important stimulus (source is not always seen such as music) and often associated with movement.



### **Smell and sight**



### **Darkness**



### **Squeeze**

When we think of squeeze issues, it has to do with different parts of the body such as things ABOVE the horse

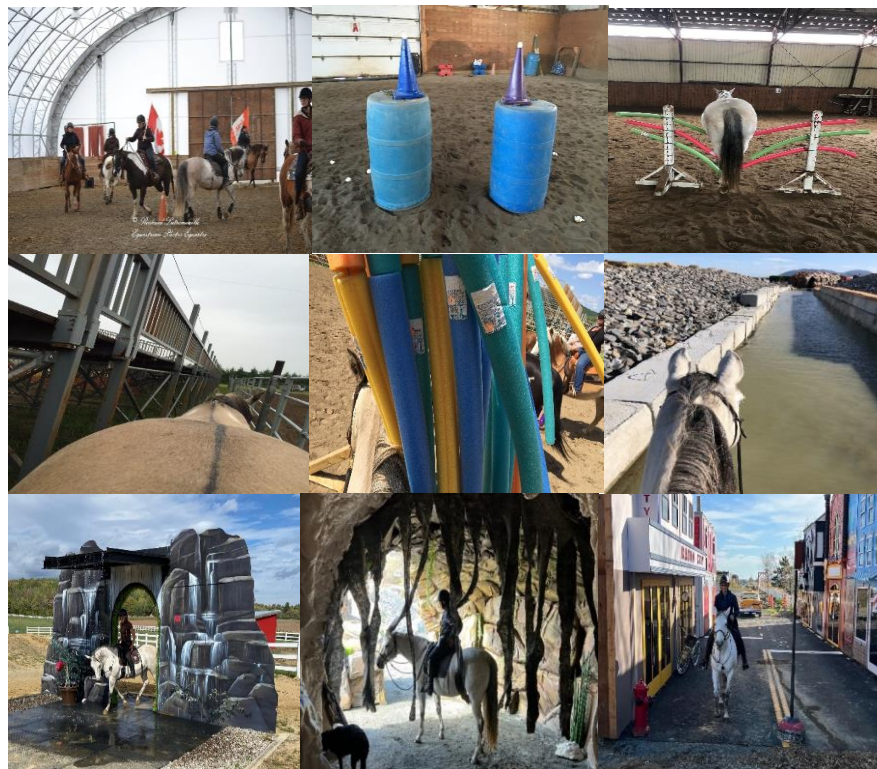
    UNDER the horse such as a horse jumping or side passing over a barrel

    ON THE SIDES of the horse



Sometimes more than one area such as in a trailer where the horse is squeezed above, on both sides, in the back and in the front. **Trailers are the ULTIMATE SQUEEZE.**

At home we can help our horse starting with very basic squeeze exercises and as a horse gets overall more confident, the squeeze issues decrease.



### Animals



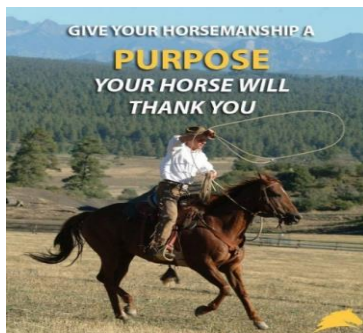
## Giving your horse RESPONSABILITIES/CHOICES

- Mental collection is very influenced by emotional collection as if a horse is worried, scared he is not able to think. Our horses are very often micro-managed and often do not have many choices or decisions to make. Wild horses must use their neurons and think things out to keep the herd safe from predators, well fed and hydrated.
- I love this phrase by Tom Dorrance “*the more we give responsibilities to our horse the more we honor his dignity*”.
- In previous generations, the horse had jobs whether it be in the bush for the loggers, the milkman in the village, transporting people to work, school, church as well as different activities before the invention of the car.



Photo: milkman in my hometown 60 years ago. He said his horse was very smart and new that on Saturdays the schedule was different.

- A good friend of mine born in B-C used to go to school in a carriage pulled by one of their horses. She often told me that the smarter horses would choose a spot to park in the sun in the winter and in the shade when it was warm.
- Horses were also known to bring people to church even midnight mass at Christmas time. My father often talked to me about going to see his girlfriend in the next village in a wagon or sleigh pulled by their horse. In recent years horses have become pleasure horses. Yes, they do work but in a different way. Their mind is not as solicited because it is often a micro-managed world where all the decisions (figures, movements, obstacles, jumps) are made by the human.



- Importance of your horse being a partner and sharing responsibilities.
- One of the first responsibilities I give my horses is to be polite and not invade me. They keep their distance unless invited to come closer and I also respect their personal bubble.
- Then it is to synchronise with my feet and keep a FLOAT IN THE ROPE at all times. And yes, I also do reverse synchronism so the horse has his say.
- Then be able to ground tie. All horses however must be able to give into pressure and be tied. But adding an amount of responsibility by leaving the lead on the ground if a horse gives well to pressure, he will stay put.
- The rectangle described earlier: the horse stays in an imaginary rectangle. This is an excellent opportunity for my horse to make the decision not to move as he gets PEACE thus release when he does not “ hit the fan”. The longer the horse can stay in his rectangle as well as how far the leader can be gives my horse a responsibility. Very important to ask the horse to stay when we leave him to go get something. And of course, how about a big THANK YOU!



Photos: Lili in her rectangle while being groomed. Indy in her rectangle in the open stall while I go fetch her saddle.

- The more the horse is the sentinel when you are on the ground, the more responsibility we give our horse to be confident in the environment.
- Give the chance to your horse to make the right decision and also at times to make errors that is how we all learn.



Photo: Andy Booth says horses learn by trial and error and even errors are “tries”.

- The instructor asked me if she could take Indy as confidence builder when giving a lesson to a horse that was not at all at ease in the arena if alone. She would bring Indy in the arena and place her. Indy would stay there the whole lesson.



- She placed Indy at 10 o'clock if we look at a circle in the first half of the arena. I suggested her to let Indy place herself as I knew that the horse that ridden in first half of the arena would be more anxious when on a circle to the left as the monster at the other end would be seen with his right eye. Many horses have "right eye issues". Indy did place herself at 2 o'clock as that is where the horse would be most anxious. She even lied down and at times slept.
- On the trail as well as when I handle my horses, I do not need to tell them where to put their feet. Of course, at times, I do tell them to be careful.

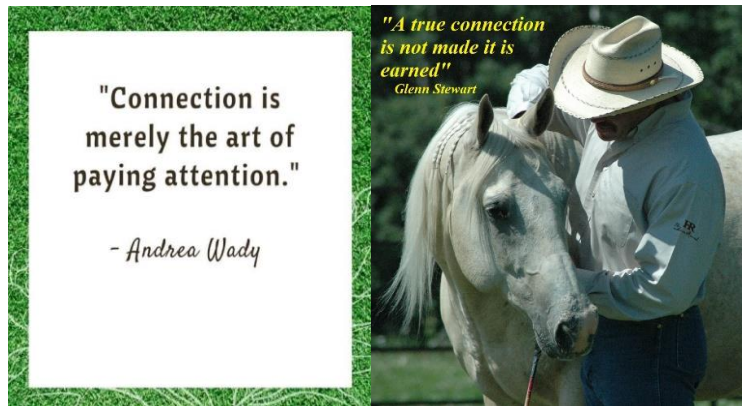


- Let us not forget the 4 reasons why my horse refuses to do something
  - fear
  - does not understand what is asked
  - does not have the prerequisites to do the task, exercise
  - at times does say NO
- On the trail, for example, give the horse the choice between 2 trails, you can go here or there whichever you prefer today. Horses love to have choices.
- Indy has participated in 47 parades and is always very calm. On this last parade we had a wait of 1h30 hour, half of it in line waiting to depart. Indy was calm and **not held with the reins** even if 25,000 enthusiastic spectators. It was her decision to stand still as she understood that that was what was expected of her. On the photo my hands are on my thighs. As I say "*the horse's mind/head is much more powerful than my 2 hands*".





## How to increase "CONNECTION"

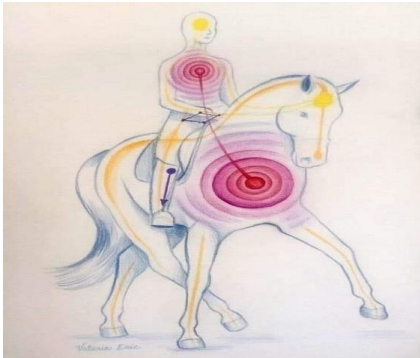


- One of the first things we must do to increase our connection with our horse is undemanding time. Our relationship with our horse is very often centered on DEMANDS, DEMANDS, DEMANDS.
- Also let us **listen them** and not only dictate.
- How about **UNDEMANDING TIME?**
- PATIENCE, SLOW DOWN.



- Change the pattern: if you always do things the same way, the horse gets dull and does not pay as much attention. Why not today ask the horse to back out of his stall, or be on the cross ties in the opposite direction etc. So, the horse is always on the alert (not worried, just awake and not a robot) just wanting to know what is on the program today. This horse is then connected to his leader.
- Lead your horse at the shoulder at first, not in front as being in front the leader is not with the horse unless very experienced and you feel '*the feel*' on the rope. This also helps your horse if he is not connected as with your stick you agitate the air behind you. Do not forget, the motor is in the hind, horses are back feet drive, not front.

- Later on, move back so the horse is the sentinel and not the human. Sentinel concept. This gives the horse the responsibility to lead.
- Make sure, you as the human, is connected and not thinking of your grocery list or the bills to pay or what to make for supper tonight. Horses are connected all the time to their surroundings seen and unseen. A beautiful example is Aramis calling me to bring Indy back when I come out of the arena and he does not yet see me as there are 4 stalls before the door, but he knows. Or when the trailer is still on the road and the neighbor hears Aramis calling Indy coming back from a trip.
- Horses are CONNECTED to their leader as well as the environment. Humans must make the effort to be connected as our mind is always full of thoughts.



- You want your horse to ask himself “ *how is she going about that today?* ” use a different barn door, back in or out of stall, barn or arena? Be creative without creating stress.



## **PRE-RIDE check**

Once we evaluated that our horse is confident where we are going to ride him, that is he is in his "sweet spot" we can proceed to evaluate if our horse will accept the responsibility to be confident, reliable and a safe partner. At times our horse is not well connected to his leader, not attentive, synchronized and not with us, their mind is elsewhere. And at times we are the one that is not connected, attentive.

Is my horse worried? Does he have an energy surplus? Is he more connected to the environment than his leader?

We can never say it enough how important it is to prepare as well as evaluate our horse in our ground work. All the preparation should be done on the ground.

The 7 C's of a pre-ride check **CONFIDENCE, CONNEXION, CONTROL, CALM, COOPERATION, COMMUNICATION. COMPLICITY!**

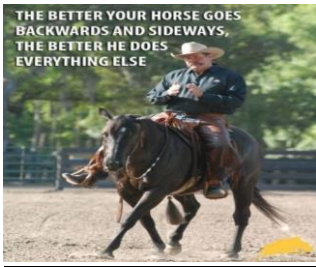
- A **pre-ride check** should always be done and even more importantly so when you are leaving for a trail ie. how is my horse today? Is he calm? Is he ready to be ridden and if so, he should willingly go to the mounting block and set himself for me to mount. There are days when horses are not in a good state of mind and should not be ridden right away but well prepared on the ground before being ridden. Is he light? Left brain? Does he yield to pressure? How is your lateral flexion from the ground? How is his response to a light suspension rein? Some days, your horse might not be in the emotional state to do a trail; as horsemen say "*you evaluate the horse that shows up today*".
- **Andy Booth**, a well-known Australian horseman now in France, recommends the riders to verify the 3C's before riding; **CONFIDENCE, CONTROL (communication with the feet), AND CONNECTION**. Does he have confidence in his CALM horse and vice-versa? Does the rider have control thus can he communicate with the horse's feet? Does the rider have a good connection with the horse that is, are they communicating effectively?
- **Neil Davies**, another Australian horseman says that to prevent major issues when riding we must have the following **3C's: CONFIDENCE, CONTROL AND COOPERATION**. Confidence in the horse brings relaxation which gives a safer horse. As for control, confidence and relaxation are prerequisites for this element otherwise the rider can never communicate well to the horse what he is to accomplish. The two first elements bring cooperation.



- Lindsey Partridge of Harmony Horsemanship in Ontario, multiple champion of the Thoroughbred Makeover and Mustang Challenge in the USA talks about **CALM, CONFIDENT AND COMMUNICATION**. For the human to remain calm we must learn to breathe deeply and slowly.
- Lyne Laforme adds **COMPLICITY** between the horse and the rider.
- ***Proper preparation prevents poor performance***

Pat Parelli

- If your horse is full of energy and has to move his feet, it is important not only to ask him to make circles but to engage his mind and ask him to increase and decrease the diameter of the circles, to make many transitions, frequent changes of direction, backup, sideways against the wall to help him concentrate and center himself on his rider, not the environment.
- **” The better a horse backs up and goes sideways, the better he does everything else”.**



Buch Brannaman, Jonathan Field, Pat Parelli, Pierre Plouffe etc.

- Horsemen encourage us to check our horse very carefully before sitting on him. How is he with
  - The extreme friendly with the rope swinging all over his body, his legs?
  - Is he light to the touch? Backs up lightly from a porcupine on the nose, on the chest?
  - Relaxation: head low, licking and chewing.
  - And if possible can you draw him to the mounting block?

## How to address a HESITATION or REFUSAL (both on the ground or in saddle)



-The first time Indy saw this huge narrow river at Horseland, she stopped somewhat hesitant. I waited (reverse synchronism) and when she lowered her head thus was on endorphin, we negotiated the river at a walk and a trot on the cordeo, no reins.

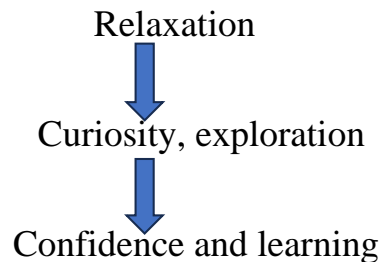
- Whether on the ground or in the saddle the same principles apply when a horse hesitates or refuses whether it be a puddle of water, the trailer or an obstacle in cowboy racing, mountain trail etc. The horse sees one thing: **DANGER!**



-I have worked with horsemen/women that go to Worlds in extreme cowboy, Calgary fair, Calgary Stampede, give clinics all over Canada, USA and even Europe. They all say when a horse refuses or hesitates in front of an obstacle, or on a new trail, **SLOW DOWN, WAIT, WAIT, CHILL, CHILL and NEVER PUSH THE HORSE!**

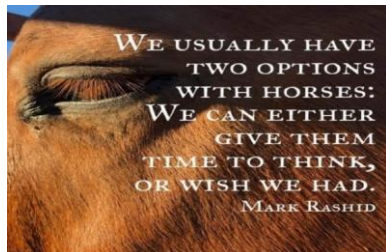
- Confidence is built not only by RETREAT but by gradual REAPPROACH otherwise I am teaching my horse that when he is scared all he needs to do is to retreat. Not sure I would go on a trail with that horse.

- Relaxation is very important in these circumstances as it is only when the horse is relaxed that he can think. We want the horse to be on endorphins so it's important to ask for the neck to be low.



-Slowing down is probably one of the hardest things to do as we are very “goal” oriented and achievers.

- **Do not bribe by giving a goodie**, that is not confidence building. We want a horse that is willing to do the job and we take the time it takes as well as respect thresholds.
- Never punish the horse; our role is to help him relax and be courageous. **TAKE YOUR TIME.**



- **Never push** the horse to pursue when he is stopped and some times frozen in place.
- **Chill, chill, chill.**
- **Wait, wait, wait.**
- Look at the end of the obstacle not where the horse has stopped as that will not help him to advance.
- Remember the steps of exploration: ears, eyes, nose, neck and then the feet.
- **Importance of a good number of successes before demanding more.** To use Chris Cox’s expression “*Let it soak in*”.
- The longer it was to get what you got, the longer you must wait to ask for more. For example, the horse was hesitant to put one foot on a bridge or a small pool with water, if it took a long time, do not ask for a second foot until he is VERY CONFIDENT with that first foot. Let the learning SOAK IN.
- Reward the slightest try.
- Make the wrong decision harder than the right decision: the horse refuses something, do not punish, just ask him to work with lots of figures, transitions,, etc.

## Grazing

Grazing is a horse's main activity when living full time outside in huge pastures. So let us not be surprised when they want to graze when we handle them outside.

Body language is very important to address a horse as it is their main means of communication. The better I use my body language the better behaved is my horse.

- My horse should graze when given permission; he should not pull me to reach the grass.



- It is important to give my horse the permission to graze. Grazing is a very basic instinctual need that I want to fulfill.
- My horse should lift his head when I approach him as body language is their primary way to communicate.
- This excellent 4 second video of Pony shows it very well.



Poney.MOV

<https://youtu.be/y0TI7ihjV3o>

- At first when my horse grazes, I should try to use my body language for him to lift his head.
- If no success NEVER PULL ON THE LEAD AS THIS DOES NOT KEEP MY HORSE LIGHT.
- I can then use the stick between the grass and his nose using phases right up to “**don't hit the fan**”. So, it's the horse's decision to stop grazing to avoid the fan as opposed to leader pulling on the lead.
- A verbal cue or code is also important to teach for when you are in the saddle you cannot put the stick between the muzzle and the grass nor use your body language to have the horse lift his head.
- I say “**up up**” and the horse's head comes up right away. We do not want to pull on the reins to keep our horse light.



Indy cesse de  
brouter.MOV

When I would take our small herd to graze the easiest for me was to sit on the fjord and pony the 3 others.

They would graze when given permission and the 4 heads came up right away when I used my code “ **up up**”,



On the site [formationquestreenligne.com](http://formationquestreenligne.com) there is a Powerpoint on grazing “ Le gazon: ami ou ennemi?”

## TRAIL riding



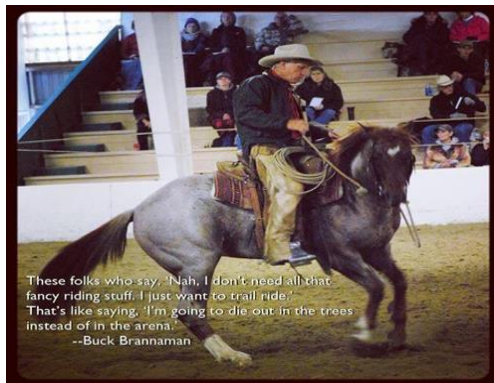
Photo on the left: Indy and Cardinal ranch horses on a trail, young horses are on loose reins; NO CONTACT! IF WE NEED TO STOP AND SEAT AID IS NOT YET EFFECTIVE, WE USE A SUSPENSION REIN! For emergencies the LATERAL FLEXION or PULLEY.

Trail riding is not the focus of this document on Horsemanship but once we have developed a safe, confident, educated horse with all the exercises proposed to date, we can surely think of going on the trail and most importantly, BE SAFE as well as FEEL SAFE!

So, like any other discipline, trail riding necessitates preparation and "know how".

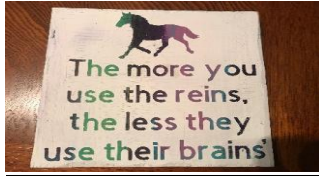
In French, on the site "[formationequestreenligne.com](http://formationequestreenligne.com)" under FORMATIONS GRATUITES is a long document in on trails LA RANDONNÉE ÉQUESTRE, UNE DISCIPLINE QUI SE PREPARE.

A very important concept: trail riding like any disciplines takes preparation/education.



We have already educated, prepared our horse with many confidence building strategies so a few concepts on trail riding.





- 
- One rein stop either by pulley rein or lateral flexion if the horse needs to be stopped.
- Horses must have their binocular vision as it is their responsibility to look where they are putting their feet.
- Suspension rein to slow down or even stop your horse.
- The extremely important verbal ‘*whoa*’.
- A confident horse is a **MUST!** Otherwise, we use the reins to control and that does not keep us safe. As I always say ‘*my horse’s mind is much more POWERFUL than my 2 hands.*’
- Do not forget the very useful ‘*touch it*’ pattern.
- **No earphones nor music:** you must be connected to your horse as well as the environment, not your music. You must also be to hear what is going on outdoors so that you accompany your horse (reverse synchronism) if he gets worried of some noise.
- Never leave if you or your horse are not calm that day as you are preparing



yourself for trouble.

- Always tell other riders if you or your horse are not OK. **There is no place for PRIDE when sitting on a horse and even more so if on a trail.**
- When riding on the trails in a group it is important to tend to the less experienced horse or rider.
- **Choose your riding partners carefully...** a very delicate subject for your safety.
- When leaving for the trail remember your approach/retreat/reapproach patterns depending on the confidence level of the horse.
- If I must abort my plan it is important to work the horse upon return: comfort/effort concept. **NEVER TO PUNISH** but to help the horse realize that trails are fun and relaxing.

### On the trail

- Same speed going than coming back.
- Horses meet left to left.
- When crossing roads in a large group, you ride parallel to other horses so all the horses cross at the same time. Once on the other side turn 90 degrees right or left to get to the trail.
- Do not create the pattern ‘‘ stop and go’’. So, after a stop ask for something such as a backup, leg yield, turn 360 degrees etc.
- When turning 90 degrees it is good to do a 270 degree turn to move the hindquarters and the front: indirect rein to disengage the hindquarters and a direct rein for the last 90 degrees. This way you made sure you have communicated with all 4 feet of your horse.
- Important to create ‘‘ sweet spots’’ to get the horse to enjoy the trails. So, at first a good idea to have the horse graze somewhere on the trail instead of back home where he wants to be as home is the ‘‘ sweet spot’’.
- Do not forget the ‘‘reverse synchronism’’ concept. If my horse is curious about something or a bit worried, I also look at where he is looking to tell him that I am also checking things out.
- Do not forget your breathing as tension in your breath is telling your horse you are worried, just as tension in your body.
- It is good to have taught your horse to be mounted not only on the mounting block as at times you must get off your horse for different reasons.
- Emergency stop is important.

### How to slow down a horse on the trail

Trail riding is a discipline that demands a relaxed and confident horse. We never blame the horse for being unconfident it just tells us we need to do our homework.

The more we micro-manage a worried horse, the more he/she gets tense. We must engage their body in more difficult exercises to keep their mental busy. Once back home, we know we have homework.

There are many ways to slow a horse down:

- The easiest way to slow down your horse is to have the person in front of you make the ‘‘fan’’ with their crop, carrot stick string or a branch as this prevents you from pulling. The person in front is more or less saying to your horse ‘‘*don't hit the fan*’’. This procedure makes the horse think and **decide himself** to slow down to avoid hitting the fan.
- Of course, if you have an experienced trail horse, that horse will take care of telling the other one to ‘‘**back off**’’. I recently heard a

person telling a rider whose horse was coming home way too fast to really take control of the reins and make sure her horse understood that she really meant it. This might be effective to stop the feet but does not build confidence nor help the horse make the right decision; it is forced. Proof, this is an experienced trail horse that still comes home too fast and emotional.

- The verbal “ **whoa** ” is good & should be used **ONLY TO STOP NOT TO SLOW DOWN** as then when one really needs a stop, you don’t get it. Saying something like ‘**easy**’ can help but might not very effective as the horse has lost his connection to rider .
- A suspension rein is also used to stop and should be practiced frequently to make sure the time you need it is effective. It becomes so light that a flick of the finger on a loose rein is effective on a responsive and calm horse. If needed the suspension rein becomes a pulley rein.
- Frequent transitions will eventually slow down the horse.
- Partial disengagement is very effective to slow down a horse so riding a shoulder in or out, a renvers or travers, a side pass. All these exercises demand more effort from the horse and will help to slow down unless he is very nervous.
- Backing up always slows down a horse if he is used to this exercise. If not you can position the horse in the backup and stay put; that can always slow him down as having him think “ *if you want to go home backwards, we sure can do that* ”.
- Riding circles lets the horse move his feet but is not taking you full speed back home. Circles are not easy to do when on a trail that is not wide enough, then zigzag, backup as well as well as 3 track movements. The same with a reverse zigzag in the opposite direction of where the horse wants to go.
- When trotting, posting every third stride instead of every second stride is also effective to slow the horse down: so 2 up and 1 down.
- Turn 270 degrees instead of 90: more demanding and helps keep the mind busier and often helps to slow down.

#### More advanced experiences

- Large groups
- Water from small creeks, to rivers and lakes
- Pony a horse or 2
- Bridges: going over and splashing water under, going under with horses on top
- Fire such as BBQ’s and campfires
- Darkness
- Wild animals
- Loud noises from helicopters, low flying airplanes, machinery etc
- Fences to open and close

## A few EXTRAS

### Long lining

- Basic technique: one rein is the porcupine, one rein is the driving.
- A nice way to introduce a horse to a new area as the human is in the back and the horse becomes the sentinel.
- Horsemen start some horses on the trail or with obstacle courses with long reins.
- Good for a horse that has issues with something coming in the back of him. We must remember that a horse's butt is 6 feet behind the eyes. The horse knows his human is there and that makes him feel more secure.

### Work in hand

Dressage riders teach their movements on the ground with work in hand so the horse understands the movements. Once mastered on the ground, it is easier to do in saddle. The western horsemen also do movements on the ground to teach their horse, before riding

- Turn on the forehand
- Turn on the haunches
- Shoulder in
- Renvers/travers
- Leg yield
- Half pass
- Pirouette

### Liberty (now the TRUTH)

All exercises done online can be done at liberty!

Once you have a solid drive and draw as well as recall, the game is yours to enjoy!



## A few obstacles

- Tarp
- Ball
- Hoola hoops
- Pool noodles
- Barrels for jump, half jump and squeeze
- Pedestal for front feet, back feet, 4 feet on, turn on the forehand and turn on the haunches
- Cones
- Poles
- Bridges, teeter totters etc etc
- Something for the squeeze : barrels, jump standards with a tarp
- Gate to open and close
- Water obstacles

We can make all kinds of patterns with poles and cones.

## RIDING

### Reins

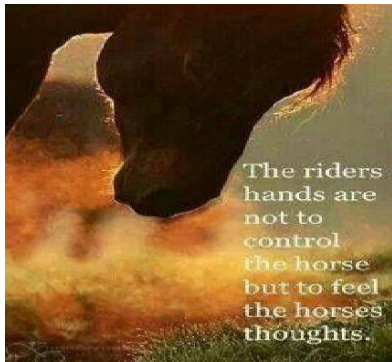
One of the most important concepts that needs more attention:

- 2 reins to communicate

- 1 rein to control, thus either a suspension rein, pulley rein or lateral flexion to stop a horse,

### NEVER A PULL BACK WITH TWO REINS.

Reins are used to communicate with the horse's body thus the feet. Before using the reins for this purpose, one needs to be able to ride the horse on a loose rein. Horsemen start their colts not using contact with the reins.



Andy Booth recently had a video where he was demonstrating riding in his large outside arena with his arms crossed against his chest thus showing that reins were not necessary to control nor to stop the horse but for finesse.

In the Parelli program we do not use contact on the reins before level 4 so it teaches us to use our body better.

## **EYES, BELLY BUTTON, SEAT, LEGS and then HANDS.**

Lyne Laforme says ***SEAT, LEGS AND HANDS IF THE SEAT AND LEG AIDS HAVE NOT BEEN UNDERSTOOD. In THIS CASE, GO BACK TO SEAT AND LEGS.***

### **Video that shows how horses are started before taking contact: loose reins, no contact. Contact comes later.**

This is one of my friends Symphonie Nadeau that I met through horsemanship clinics: she is an excellent rider, champion of extreme cowboy races. I saw her at Equine affaire in the USA as she was invited in 2019. This is with Electric Star who was to turn 4 years a few months later. She had sat on him a few times, did all the preparatory groundwork.

This is the first time he goes on a short trail and even separates a bit. Again, look at the loose reins and the low head. This video was published in an article on relaxation.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuAeKoIy83Q&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2qcaLtTC9X25V\\_gEMTe3jifESvEw7\\_ivk9cnvchaUwEBTdQyT4-vQae74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuAeKoIy83Q&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2qcaLtTC9X25V_gEMTe3jifESvEw7_ivk9cnvchaUwEBTdQyT4-vQae74)

### **REIN effects**

As horsemen say “ **reins are connected to the feet, not the head**”

#### **2 reins to communicate**

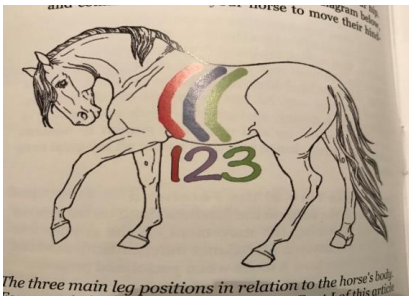
##### **1 rein to control**

- **Suspension rein** stops all 4 feet. It is applied upward and never with a pull back and is used for loose reins only. It is important to practice on the ground and as soon as one lifts a rein, the horse stop. It is even effective when riding bridless.
- **Pulley rein** is a tight suspension rein to stop.



- **Lateral flexion** for an emergency stop. This is the first thing you are taught in horsemanship clinic either suspension rein to pulley rein and lateral flexion. **SAFETY IS A PRIORITY.**
- **Direct rein:** affects the front leg on the same side, must be applied when that leg gets of the ground. It is an active rein thus held a little higher than the supporting rein.
- **Indirect rein:** affects the opposite hind leg. That is the only time the hand goes further than the belly button when teaching a young horse. Once it is refined the movement is much more subtle, the hand does not cross the middle of the horse. This is an active rein thus held slightly higher than the supporting rein. The indirect rein also supports the shoulder on the same side,
- **Supporting rein,** helps to control the shoulder from going out, always held a bit lower than the other rein which is an active rein.

## LEGS



The three main leg positions in relation to the horse's body

- Depending on the movement the leg is either
  - At the girth ie position 2  
If applied to only one side, it is for leg yield  
Then, the other leg is then neutral and slightly off the horse
  - A bit in front ie position 1 to affect the shoulder
  - A bit behind ie position 3 to affect the hind leg

## **HAVE FUN! ENJOY THE JOURNEY!**

It is a worthwhile journey! Doing things differently does not necessarily take that much more time, just doing other things. An example, when the truck comes to deliver the hay to the barn and the lift brings the hay to the loft what a good opportunity to work on confidence building. Doesn't take more time than lunging or riding but sure helps build confidence!

## **Do not avoid stimuli!**

**Thank you for photos of your horse or your site**

Chantal Bastien of Horseland who has often given Indy and I the privilege to enjoy this magnificent site to improve our horsemanship.

Rebecca Berendsen and Timber

Manon Cadieux and Jack

Uta Ciarla and Lili

France Dupont and Pax

LoriAnn Fellner and Moesby and Cortado

Elisabeth Gevas and her Norwegian fjords Thor, Freya, Poney as well as Aramis & Jack

Farrah Green and the Droghedamanor horses at Upper Canada Village photos

Josée Lafontaine and Merlin

Lyne Laforme and one of her horses as well as her numerous concepts

Greg MacCaul for teaching Indy the basics to pull a carriage

Kathy Knight and Cameo

Lindsey Partridge for her mare and foal photo

Symphonie Nadeau et Electric Star for her video

Clair Patton and the story about Indy being Rafik's sent' inel in the arena

Evelyn Senecal and her horse Zdeno pulling a carriage in the pond

Upper Canada Village for giving Indy and I the privilege to be ambassadors of

Horsemanship for 9 years at the Horse Lovers week end: beautiful photos.

**Thank you, Indy, for being such a wonderful and reliable partner!**