



Third Anniversary

By Tim Hayes

It's my third anniversary writing this column for *Horse Directory*. I want to thank its wonderful owners/publishers and my friends Doug and Lorraine Dittko. I want to thank all of you, and all of your horses for letting me share my knowledge and love of Natural Horsemanship. It has made a profound positive difference with my horse. I have been told by a great many of you it has made the same profound positive difference with you and your horses as well.

Natural Horsemanship is a simple horse program for us complicated humans. It's simple because it means just learn and understand what is "Natural" for your horse and do that. If you don't know what is natural for your horse physically, mentally and emotionally get one of the many Books, Videos or DVD's and find a teacher who can help explain and show you how to incorporate this knowledge into your horse program. Establish yourself as your horses' leader by communicating in his natural language on the ground before you get on his back. Then ride together in harmony in any saddle you want.

Whenever we are with a horse he is telling us something with his body language and behavior. When he's happy with what we're asking him to do he tells us by being a wonderful and willing partner. When there is a problem with what or how we are asking, he tells us by resisting our request. Anytime our horse resists he's saying to us:

"I won't do what you want for one of four reasons which can effect my survival: fear, disrespect, misunderstanding or pain. If you want to be my leader, you need to know which one it is. Until you (my human) can change what or how you're asking me, it's not in the best interest of my self preservation to do what you want."

People usually call me when they need help making a change with their horse. Sometimes they want to improve something. Most of the time it's to eliminate something. I always begin by asking them to get with their horse so they can show me "The Problem". I explain that the horse isn't doing what they want for a very good reason that makes total sense to the horse. By resisting he's telling them he's unable to comply because of one of the four reasons mentioned above. To cause a positive change in your horses' behavior you must be able to "Read" the four different behaviors. You must know the difference if he's behaving disrespectful as opposed to fearful. Not only will your correct response bring a positive change in your horse, it may also save you from getting hurt.

These are just some of the ways my clients have told me horses have been telling them to do things differently: not standing quietly for grooming or saddling, lifting their head to avoid being bridled, not allowing their feet to be picked up to be cleaned or shod especially the hind quarters, difficulty paste worming, walking into and over people, invading personal space, won't stand still when mounting, won't lead well, pulls or walks in front of human, won't lunge, biting, bolting, kicking, bucking, rearing, tail swishing, won't go in the trailer, won't stay in the trailer, charges out of the trailer, goes

into the trailer at home but won't get back in after the show, spooky and over reactive, is good at home and difficult at shows, won't stop consistently when asked, won't go forward, balks, changes gait without being asked, difficulty leaving the barn or leaving his other horse friends, jigs on the trail, hard to catch, afraid of water, resists being clipped, difficult to bath, pins ears or turns his butt when human enters his stall, food aggressive with other horses and humans, add any I've left out.

I would like to thank the people who have called me for help with these issues, kept an opened mind and have been willing to look at the situation from the horses' point of view. It has been wonderful seeing the joy in their faces and the relief from their horses when they both discover that they can actually "talk" with each other. With this new ability to communicate they begin to truly understand and teach each other. Everything becomes fun again.

I have been amazed at how many horses there are on Long Island. I have worked with humans and horses in: Wading River, Baiting Hollow, New Suffolk, Mattituck, Orient, Southampton, Bridgehampton, Westhampton, Hampton Bays, East Quogue, Montauk, Shelter Island, Manorville, Sag Harbor, Brentwood, Brookville, Bellport, Southold, Riverhead, Aquebogue, Huntington, Jamesport, Cutchogue, Islandia, Bohemia, Mt. Sinai, Watermill, Brookhaven, Center Moriches, Eastport, Medford, Yaphank, Westbury, Commack, Smithtown, Hauppauge, Middle Island, Ridge, Calverton, Dix Hills, Lloyds Harbor, West Islip and East Hampton.

I have also had the pleasure of being invited to teach at some wonderful Long Island Barns and Stables: Two Trees, Applewild, Woffler Estates Willow Tree, Indian Horse, Stanhope, Hidden Pond, Gold Rush, BJ Farms, Hidden Lake, Sweet Hills, Paard Hill, Hillcrest, Knoll Farm, Islandia Farms, Oakwood Farm, Saddle Rock, Highwind, Park View, Long Island Riding Academy and Deep Hollow Ranch.

Last year was the debut of my website: www.hayesisforhorses.com. It has received enormous complimentary feedback and been a wonderful resource for horse owners of all disciplines. Not only has it been visited by horse lovers in Long Island, it has received visitors from all over the world. It is updated monthly and contains all 36 *Horse Directory* articles, a Natural Horseman's Library and Helpful Links, my two TV Specials from Cablevision and Plum TV and last months profile article in the Sunday New York Times. I am extremely proud of this site and am forever grateful to my Web Master, Gifted Designer and good friend Meaghen Lewis of www.website-delight.com for creating it.

Finally as always, let me publicly thank and acknowledge my number one teacher Austin (and as I lovingly refer to him) The Wonder Horse. Once I learned to communicate in his language, he has taught me and continues to teach me everything I need to learn to be a better horseman, a better human and a better teacher. There is never a time when he doesn't take the opportunity to let me know: "Tim, you might want to think about doing that again differently."

Thank you all again and for those of you I have yet to meet, I am looking forward to the years ahead, helping you create a rewarding new relationship with your horse.

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