



HAYES IS FOR HORSES.COM
**If You Own A
 Horse, You're A
 Horse Trainer!**

By Tim Hayes

Did you know that every second you're with your horse you're training him either positively or negatively. Your horse knows this and proves it to you with his behavior.

Having a horse in your life can be very similar to being a parent (biological or step). Young horses that have not experienced negative interaction with humans can be fun and quite rewarding to start, teach and develop. Those that have been exposed to humans dispensing anger, frustration, force and pain become more difficult. Some refer to them as "project horses" (like a child requiring Special Ed.). As Dr. Robert Miller DVM tells us; "shaping behavior is much easier than modifying it."

The flip side of this is "overcooking" your horse (once your steak is well done, it becomes impossible to change it back to medium-rare). If we spend most of our early training treating our horse like a pet, he may become ultra-confident and unafraid of anything in the human world including humans. This creates a lack of respect for us as his leader and our horse becomes his own leader and very self-reliant. Then when we make a request (either on the ground or on his back) it is our horse who decides whether to comply or resist.

Love without discipline equals disaster. If my horse does not respect me as his leader, then being with my horse, on the ground or on his back, becomes not only unpleasant but dangerous. By the same token if we relentlessly drill our horse striving for perfection, then just like children, they will gradually loose their desire to improve and even come to resent us for asking. Neither human nor horse likes to be micromanaged.

Buying a horse that has been positively started and trained with a few good years under his belt does not necessarily guarantee a resistance free relationship either.

Just as young children become teenagers and begin to question and challenge their parent's authority, horses in many ways become perpetual teenagers always looking for an opportunity to test or challenge us for the role of leader. Sometimes it seems that no matter what kind of horse we have, we're often putting up with some undesirable behavior. What do we do?

Natural Horsemanship teaches us to examine our relationship with our horse from *his* point of view.

All horses no matter what their age, breed or background have the same three primary needs. First they need to know they're safe from predators. Second, they need to feel comfortable physically,

emotionally and mentally. This requires food, water, the option of movement or rest and not being alone. If they can't be with other horses then another prey animal like a donkey or a goat will do. It's so important for them to have companionship. Thirdly, and this is the key to all of the above situations we have been discussing, *horses need to know who's the leader.*

Horses are natural followers. They are actually quite content to let another horse be the leader. They know that by following and complying with everything their leader requests, they are literally putting their life in his or her care. Therefore they must trust and respect their leader 100%.

If we want to be our horse's leader and have a truly harmonious relationship both on his back and on the ground, then just like another horse, it is our responsibility to *earn* his trust and respect.

Horses establish leadership by playing dominance games with each other. The horse that controls the movement of another horse wins the game and becomes the leader. However leadership is never permanently guaranteed. The leader may be tested and challenged numerous times. It can occur the next day, the next year or whenever another horse thinks he can win (very much like teenagers).



"Know your horse's state of mind." Photo courtesy of Tim Hayes

Our horses do the same thing with us. No matter how wonderful and loving your relationship is, your horse will repeatedly test and challenge (sometimes in very subtle ways) to see if he can continue to trust and respect you to be his leader and put his life in your care. If he accepts you as his leader, when you ask him to ride away from the barn and out on the trail he will willingly follow your request even if he would prefer to stay behind with his buddies. He respects your leadership and knows he will be safe and cared for.

Natural Horsemanship teaches us how to play these dominance games. It's called Groundwork and we can learn to both play them and win them with our horse. *To truly be safe we must earn their trust and respect before we get on their back to ride.* We also learn to expect even a wonderful and compliant horse to test our leadership commitment on any day at any time. No matter how insignificant the test might be, we must immediately respond and correct his behavior. If we don't, our horse believes we are telling him that we are willing to follow his idea or request. Gradually he will begin to take back the leadership position and this is how and why resistance shows up in our relationship. (Examples)

"I was riding my horse at a walk and he started to trot. I just kept trotting with him. I figured I was going to trot eventually so why bother to stop and start again. It was easier to just keep going."

"I was walking my horse back to the barn and he stopped to eat some grass. I waited and let him eat. I didn't think it was a big deal and I didn't want to get into a pulling match".

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and a new state of the art regulation size outdoor arena. With all the rain, the arena was a fast track with the amazing footing that Bob Ceparano installed.

It seemed fitting that Bob opened his facility and have a ribbon cutting with 10 goaler Mariano Aguerre and company mixing it up with a round robin played Tuesday June 23, 2009. "Country Farms/Cinque Terra" (Bobby Ceparano with Robert Ceparano substituting 1 chukker, Alessandro Bazzoni and Mariano Aguerre) vs "Terra Ferma" (Rich Rothenberg, Enrique Bauzada and Nick Manifold) vs "Bretts's Jets" (Brett Gearwar, Johnny Redlich, and Naco Taverna). It was unbelievable to see these players in action, rockin n rollin. The handiness of their horses and the quick reactions of the players was phenomenal. Country Farms/Cinque Terra came out on top over both teams. What an afternoon of polo. It was like poetry in motion. – *Debra Napp*

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community that have been very supportive and maybe will shelter a horse for a period of time until we can work out a plan to stabilize that situation. **Eileen** - Let's talk about the event today, how is it going so far?

Gerald - Everything is great, people have been fantastic. We have the Rough Riders, the Islip Drill Team, we have the State Park Police, US Customs, fire rescue accelerant dogs. We horse demonstrations, k-9 demonstrations. It is a festive atmosphere; it is a beautiful day.

Eileen - You couldn't have asked for a better day

Gerald - Yes, we are really happy. Of course we want more people and it was tough for us to get the work out but we are going to build and this is a positive thing that has happened. We got a lot of great support from the horse community.

The ERC is dedicated to equine rescue and rehabilitation and

to restoring horsemanship, the heritage and humane treatment of the horse. The mission of the collaboration is to provide a program of horse rescue and/or advocacy for physically or psychologically abused, neglected, troubled, or abandoned horses and to provide rehabilitation, retraining, and placement, where indicated, or retirement within an environment of physical well-being and trust.

For more information about the Suffolk County SPCA call: 631-382-SPCA, or visit their website at: www.suffolkcountyspca.org. See the sights and sounds of the Summer Party for Animals at www.talkinhorsestv.com.

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To our horse, everything we do and everything we don't do means something. Whether we know it or not, every time we're with our horse we're training him positively or negatively. The moment we become horse owners, we become horse trainers. Like becoming a successful parent and raising a wonderful child we need all the right help we can get. We have to find out; if we're doing not doing the right thing. Teachers, clinics, books, tapes and DVD's; we must obtain knowledge; we must get support. Then we can truly feel safe and have fun. The horse knows everything we know and everything we don't know. We don't know what we don't know and the horse knows this. If we don't know and we're the problem, then we don't know we're the problem and we blame the horse. (Read this two times very slowly).

Tom Dorrance said, "The horse is never wrong." Over the years the principles of Natural Horsemanship have taught me this is absolutely true 100% of the time. If we learn to understand and communicate with our horse in his language, he will become our greatest teacher. He will teach us how to be the leader. The one he needs and the one we would like to be. ©Tim Hayes 2009

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Pro-Slaughter Group Issues Tainted Survey Results

The Unwanted Horse Coalition, a subsidiary of the American Horse Council continues to present a false facade of neutrality on the explosive issue of horse slaughter in America, all the while doing everything in its considerable power to bring back an industry shunned by the overwhelming majority of Americans.

The Washington D.C. based lobbying group has the support of pro-slaughter breeders, ranchers, and others with an economic interest in disposing of horses for profit – no matter the cruelty involved.

The latest AHC/UHC tactic was Thursday's issuance of the results from an obviously slanted "national survey." As an example, the survey reported that 86 percent to 88 percent of participants perceived that abuse was a big problem in the past year while only 22-28% thought it had been a big problem three years ago. This bracketing conveniently omitted the nearly two year period in which the domestic slaughter plants were closed before the economy collapsed. The survey results reflected that among the participants the closing of the domestic slaughter plants was considered second to the economy as the most significant contributor to the neglect problem. Clearly this perception cannot be valid given that 134,000 horses were exported for slaughter in 2008; the second highest slaughter count since 1995.

The survey results were held until the senate committee hearing giving anti slaughter advocates no opportunity to respond. The release of this survey in conjunction with the requested GAO study was intended as a stalling technique to delay legislation that has overwhelming congressional support. This is yet another attempt in a long string of such tactics to prevent legislation from going to the senate floor for a vote.

In addition to leading questions, the targeted participants were largely members of pro slaughter organizations. Equine welfare organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States, Animal Welfare Institute, the Equine Welfare Alliance and numerous anti slaughter organizations were not invited to participate. A major supporter of the American Horse Council and Unwanted Horse Coalition is the American Quarter Horse Association that actively lobbies for horse slaughter. Horses registered to the Amarillo based breed association account for approximately half of all horses going to slaughter as breeders are encouraged by its leadership to breed with no regard to the resulting excess horses. Many of the horses going to slaughter are culls which breeders were unable to sell. Remarkably, only 30% of these "stakeholders" thought this was contributing to the over population and neglect.

The study will almost certainly impact wild horse legislation, HR 1018, as well as anti horse slaughter legislation. With the upcoming GAO study and current BLM budget deficits, Congress must immediately issue a moratorium on wild Mustang round-ups until the GAO study is completed.

EWA welcomes a GAO study and believes that it will undoubtedly put aside perceptions and propaganda as reflected in the UHC survey and focus on solid statistical evidence. EWA plans to make available to the GAO its considerable statistical research on the subject of abuse and neglect, including the 2008 study done in conjunction with Animal Law Coalition. Americans should be outraged that Congress allows needed legislation to languish and continually be blocked and stalled by special interest groups that perpetuate the over breeding of horses.

For information visit: www.equinewelfarealliance.org