

COVER PHOTO

Phil Haugen

CRITICAL FOR SUCCESS

Phil Haugen Horsemanship

All photos courtesy of Chelsea Kroes

As I make preparations for a clinic coming up this weekend, I always begin to think about what the critical elements are for helping the participants to have the best opportunity to improve themselves, which will in turn improve their equine partners. I reflect on what I do daily in my program, and the three levels of exercises that I put all of our customer horses and our own personal performance horses through every day. However as I go through all the philosophies of my program, and all the exercises that we put these horses through to give them that rock solid foundation that we

all want and love, I always end up thinking about what it takes to make it all come together. One word determines the amount and magnitude of success and enjoyment that we will achieve with our horses when we implement this training program.

“That word is COMMITMENT”

I truly believe that in this country we produce some of the greatest horses on earth. I have always felt that there are so few horses that are given the opportunity to reach their potential. There are several reasons for this--

these are just a few; lack of time, lack of knowledge, limitations on facilities, lack of proper equipment, etc. We all live in a busy, busy world and time goes way too fast for most people and there doesn't seem to be enough of it, I'm right there with you. However, I know that the one element in my program that is critical to have to continue to produce a great product year after year is my Commitment. I have to be committed to putting in the time and effort with each individual at a clinic and each horse that I have in training to help them improve and put them in a position to reach their

“Well, I think he's about three hundred rides from being ready.”



Photo courtesy of
Chelsea Kroes



potential.

One quick story: My daughter Hannah is working with a young horse that we are starting to season and develop into her next rodeo horse. This horse has a lot of talent, has a great foundation, and has a ton of potential. But, he is inexperienced and is just now starting to realize how

hard he can run. This situation requires lots of correct repetitions to continue to strengthen his foundation, so the wheels don't fall off the wagon when we make those fast runs. Hannah asked me one day, how long before you think he'll be ready. I said, well, I think he's about three hundred rides from being ready. With that being said,

understand that each ride results in improvement of yourself and your horse. I followed that up by telling Hannah that it can take a year to get those rides in, or it can take 3 years, or 5 years to get those 300 rides in. It's all about the trainer/riders Commitment to helping themselves and their horses improve on a daily basis. Well, I've noticed that since that day, Hannah hasn't missed many days working with her future rodeo horse, and the results and improvement in both have been very noticeable. She has made a commitment to get that horse ready to win, and there is no doubt in my mind that by the time she gets those 300 rides on him he will be ready.

“Just keep showing up at the barn every morning and you'll keep getting better.”

This is just a classic example of what I talk about all the time to my students about making that commitment to helping yourself and your horse reach your potential. Just as in Hannah's case; she has the horse, we have the facilities, she has good equipment, she has me for a resource, but at the end of the day the number one element that can limit her success is her commitment. You can spend all of your time studying pedigrees, working on your facilities, buying good equipment, watching training shows and training DVD's, etc. but if you don't make the commitment to apply that knowledge to yourself and your horse you have wasted all that time and you won't reap the benefits.

My Dad told me years ago, “just keep showing up at the barn every morning and you'll keep getting better”. A simple concept that applies to about any



occupation. I know that I get two or three times the results now in half the time compared to twenty years ago, just because my program is so much more advanced and efficient, and I have figured out a lot of things that don't work. I know that if I don't keep a Commitment to getting better, and a Commitment to continuing to produce a great product, my business will begin to falter.

Make the Commitment to yourself on a daily basis to get better and apply that same work ethic to training your horse and you WILL achieve the success you desire.

I hope you enjoyed this Trainer's viewpoint on this subject, and if you have any questions please call, email, or message us and we will get right back to you! Have a great month and come see us! Take care,

Phil

