

"TRUST and RESPECT"

This is an interesting subject that I feel is misunderstood sometimes by us humans when it relates to developing a relationship of "trust and respect" with our equine counterparts. "I just don't trust him", is a response I hear sometimes from customers that have brought me a horse to fix some training issues and students at my clinics who are encountering challenges with their horses. Once again, the harsh reality of a situation where we don't feel that we can trust our horse goes back on us. Usually the reason we have a hard time trusting our horse is because our horse's responses are inconsistent when put in similar situations, thus they respond in one way this time and a different way the next time. So essentially our "mistrust" is based on their inconsistencies.

Our horses are a reflection of our knowledge, methods, and habits that we employ in our training programs

so when we are having a "trust" issue with our horse it's probably time to do a little reflecting on what we've done to create this issue. A horse develops their trust, respect, confidence, willingness to please, and overall attitude towards us based on how we manage and train them in their daily lives. "Trust and respect" are *earned* not *owed*. This goes both directions. I have to earn my horse's "trust and respect" just as they in turn will earn/ gain my "trust and respect" through their consistent performance and actions. This consistency has to start with me.

From day one I think it is super important that we manage and train our horses in a way that develops this consistency and starts to nurture this relationship of "trust and respect". I talk a lot about "training your horse's mind to think" at my clinics and I think this is one concept that really helps to develop this relationship that you seek. Through every step of my training program I try to continually ask myself if my presentation of what we are doing makes sense to that horse, knowing that if the horse understands what response I am looking for, then he is using the "thinking" side of his brain. When a horse understands what you are asking of them and they get the relief and the reward for giving the desired response, they start to develop confidence and consistency and you start to earn that horse's "trust and respect" because they start to understand what you want. A horse responds negatively because they generally are scared, confused, frustrated, etc. These are some of the factors that develop a horse's "mistrust" in its owner/rider/trainer.



"Consistency is the Key"



PHIL HAUGEN

You know this is a similar concept that a lot of you use every day in your businesses with your employees and your families. Your employees earn your “trust and respect” through their actions just as you gain their “trust and respect” by how you manage and treat them. The same concept applies with our family members and friends--it’s a two-way street. It’s just human nature that with our horses sometimes we forget that the trust and respect we want from our horses is not “owed” to us--it is something we have to “gain” through the consistency of our management and training methods.

Consistency is the key--don’t ask for a response 3 different ways and expect the exact same response from your horse each time. Inconsistency breeds frustration in our equine partners. Frustration yields negative responses and insecurity. We want to nurture an environment that builds confidence in our horse. This confidence in turn develops a relationship of “trust and respect”. I hope this makes sense to everybody. If you have any questions or comments you can message me on Facebook or go to my site and email me. Also, we just finished shooting the video for my “Foundation to Finish” DVD this last week--it should be on the market later this Fall; and my new training site should be ready to launch about the same time. Have a great month and safe training.



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