

Training Advice:

I was recently reminded by a trainer back home in the States and I am taking this opportunity to provide some important information regarding training. This concerns some of the problems that I find in helping people to train their horses.

My following comments are not generally regarding rider confidence problems, which is a completely different matter.

I am often amazed by some of the horse owners that I work with in my efforts to help them and their horse's progress and solve various problems. Sometimes I am pleasantly amazed by how open minded and by how much sincere effort some folks apply during and following my lessons. Unfortunately, from time to time, I am amazed in the reverse.

One person will listen intently, with an open mind and get rapid and positive results. This often happens on an immediate basis. Sometimes training takes more time but they continue to apply themselves toward a successful result.

Another person will have the exact same lesson(s) and then a few weeks later, if not before then on my return, they ask questions that make me wonder if they listened at all. This is even more frustrating as I make it a rule to take a lot of time making sure that they understand me during lessons and I also ask them to print out specific sections of my site so that they have lists of the basic exercises I have taught so that they have a reference and don't have to remember so much from any one lesson.

Following many thousands of horse jobs, I now surmise that one main reason for the difference in the outcome has to do with the individual person's state of mind.

It seems that when it comes to horse training success or failure, there are basically three generalities in which that owners can be grouped.

1. Those who believe that they CAN succeed.

2. Those who DON'T believe that they can succeed.

3. Those who DON'T REALLY CARE about succeeding. These are usually the people who would like to be able to do it but aren't willing to put forth the required effort.

Thankfully this last group is few in number and they generally are the only ones who come up with false excuses, such as "my horse doesn't need natural treatment and training". This is very unfortunate for their horses as it has been proved many times that horses are much happier and live better lives with their owners in successful partnerships as well as perform better in various competitive situations.

As it is with my USA trainer colleagues and friends, it has been my experience that folks who believe they can eventually succeed, are the ones who put out the consistent effort required to find a way to get things done.

September 2008 Essex Rider
(Training State of Mind)

On the other side of that coin, the folks that don't believe they can, initially fail to get their desired results and subsequently give up without putting out further / sufficient effort or experiment in a continuing effort.

In the cases of those who believe they can succeed, they seem to never give up and keep trying no matter what. Even when they get poor results, they never see it as failure. They analyze their mistakes and work on how to find out what works best in their horse's case. They contact me with sincere questions.

When it comes to training horses, it is the positive, determined and tenacious attitude that is necessary for success.

The old very applicable adages are. (1) Never give up trying. (2) Never be afraid to fail. (3) Most of the successful people (from any walk of life), fail many, many times before they finally succeed. This is how we learn.

Other than for lost rider and/or horse confidence issues, it is my job as a trainer to find out what clients want to achieve with their horses and try to give it to them.

Whenever a client's goals are unrealistic with the horse they currently own, it is my job as a trainer to ask the owner questions about what they want. After the owner tells me, it is then my job to educate the owner as to what is possible and what isn't.

It is best, even when sometimes difficult, to tell the owner how it really is. Telling them the truth - right up front - so that there will be no misunderstandings or hard feelings later is the best way to go.

I have lost some potential clients that way as some owners just can't handle the truth. They want a trainer who will tell them only what they want to hear. Those kinds of owners are destined for disappointment (and are destined to bad-mouth the trainer too).

I don't want to be a part of misleading clients. There are plenty of those type trainers out there.

I try to attract and keep only the good, open minded owners who truly care for their horse's wellbeing. They will be happy clients (with more responsive and happy horses) and the natural horse training business will be better for it in the long run.

Closing observation about horse mentality: Horses are curious creatures and that is a good thing as it causes them to exercise the thinking side of their brain (what is commonly called the left side). A horse's natural curiosity is often inhibited by skepticism and fear of being hurt, which makes building up the horse's confidence in us humans a high priority.

Until next time, have fun and stay safe.

Lewis Blackburn, www.blackburnnaturalhorsetraining.com, blackieb@btconnect.com,
01799-543711, 0771-8317654

Blackburn Natural Horse Training
blackieb@btconnect.com
www.blackburnnaturalhorsetraining.com