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How To Use Horse Training Thinking To Solve Dang Near Any Problem With A Horse

By Andy Curry

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by: **Andy Curry**

Horse training can be a relatively mysterious subject to people who have not studied it. Even more mysterious is a behavioral problem a horse has that causes his owner stress and frustration.

What many horse owners don't understand is often the handler, not the horse, is causing the problem.

That being said, that is the first consideration in unscrambling the horse's ill behavior.

For instance, a common problem riders have is a horse being spooky. In layman's terms, that means a horse is nervous and afraid something is going to "get him". Thus, whenever the horse and owner go for a ride it's not usually a relaxing moment.

As a matter of fact, both horse and rider are on edge.

So if we take the premise that the rider is causing the horse to spook, then we must ask, "How is the rider causing this."

An uninformed rider may not be aware that perhaps he is sitting tensely in the saddle. Also, maybe he's stiff as a board and has a white-knuckle hold on the reins.

Believe it or not, the horse can sense and feel this tense. When the horse is in the habit of feeling it then the horse's spookiness is also the rider's.

Picture it like this. Two deathly scared kids are walking home at night. They both hear sounds and see things. One kid thinks he saw something and nervously asks, "D-d-d-did you see that?" Seconds later the other kid hears something and cries, "D-d-did you h-h-hear that?" Together they intensify each other's fears and their anxiety grows leaps and bounds.

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So it is with the rider and horse. Maybe not to that extent, but still it happens.

And since the rider is human and capable of reasoning, then he or she must be the one to interrupt the pattern of behavior. The rider must loosen up while in the saddle. Relax. Have fun. Learn to watch the horse's signals that he has spotted something – and then talk to the horse and start giving him confidence.

Soon, the horse's demeanor will change and the result will be a more relaxed, fun to ride horse.

Whether the rider realizes it or not, he or she is training the horse by just riding. The horse simply reacts to the stimuli he gets. If the stimuli is consistent, the horse's reaction will become a habit until changed. If the stimuli is tense, causes fear reactions, and so on, the result is a spooky horse.

This is but one example of how us humans can actually be the reason the horse does or does not do

something we ask of him. Although it's true that the rider is not the cause 100% of the time, it's a good place to start untangling the problem because it's often where it begins.

Andy Curry is a nationally known horse trainer and author of several best selling horse training and horse care books. For information visit his website at

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leading expert on Jesse Beery's horse training methods which can be seen at

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The Top 3 Tricks Horse Owners Can Use To Unspoil A Barn Spoiled Horse

By Andy Curry

It's been weeks since you went riding. Now you have time to ride this afternoon and there ain't no one gonna stop you. Excited, you saddle up your horse and get on him. You get about 50 feet from the barn and your horse turns around and goes back - and you can't stop him. Why? You have a barn spoiled horse. This is a common scenario for novice horse owners.

Here are the top three tricks to solve the barn sour problem.

Teach your horse that you have control over him. Once your horse gets it in his mind that you can make him do what you want him to do, you have control over him and can thus make him leave the barn. One way to get control over him is to use a training technique called doubling. When you double your horse you teach him you can control him.

It doesn't take long before your horse will know you can control him. Be careful when doubling though.

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If you do it too much at a time you can over do it. Your horse could get so sensitive to you doing it that he may try to anticipate it. If he sees your hands making the slightest movement that looks like you're about to double him, he may double himself. Thus, just double him four to six times a day on both sides. He'll quickly learn you have control.

The next thing you can try is this: Make it dang hard to do the wrong thing - and make it real easy to do the right thing. Here's what I mean. A while back my horse didn't want to leave her buddies or the barn. We'd get about 100 feet away and she'd turn around and bolt back. She'd stop in front of the barn expecting me to get off, remove the saddle and tack, and put her back into the corrals.

By my barn is two hay stacks. There is a space between them big enough to go through and do figure eights around the hay stacks. So every time she'd go back I would make her work, and work, and work at running figure eights around those hay stacks. Then I would test her to see if she had enough and would leave the area.

The first seven times she ran back. Each time we came back to the barn we'd run more laps around the hay stacks. I could tell she was getting tired. But the eighth time I walked her away from the hay stacks I noticed she went quite a ways before turning to go back.

When we went back again we ran more figure eights. Only this time I could tell we didn't have to do too many. I walked her out and away from doing the figure eights and I suddenly had a horse who decided that it was sooo much nicer going for a walk away from the barn rather than doing a bunch of crummy ol' figure eights. We had a nice ride that day and she was in no hurry to get home.

The last thing to do is this: Ride. Ride a lot. Don't wait for weeks or months in between riding. Try to ride at least once per week for three or four hours. Preferably, try to ride at least twice a week for a few hours at a time. (Ideally, you should ride everyday. But that's hard to do with today's time constraints) Doing that your horse will get in his brain that you're going to ride and he's going to leave

the barn and there will be no argument. In fact, if you want to have a great horse the biggest secret is this: Ride the heck out him!

So if your horse is barn spoiled you can try doubling him to show you are in control. The next thing you can try is making the wrong thing difficult and the right thing easy. Make it dang hard for him to go the wrong thing and very pleasant to do the right thing. And lastly, ride your horse often. Two to three times a week if possible.

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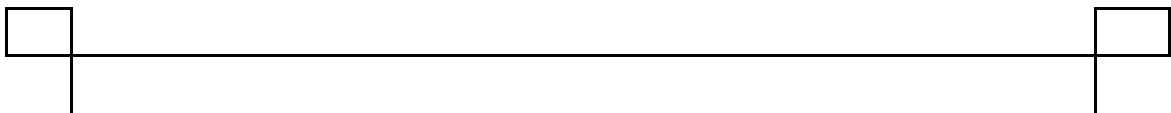
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