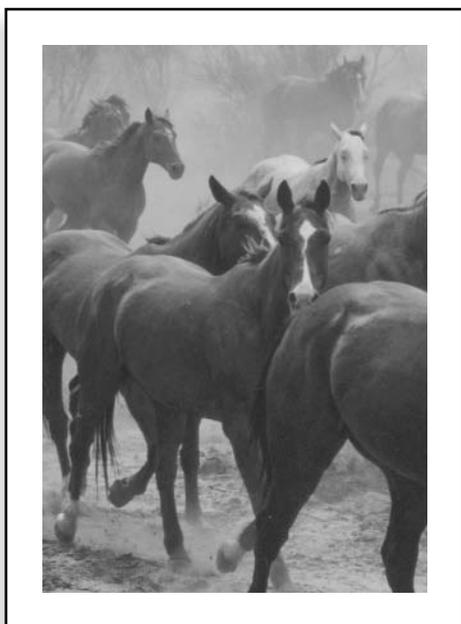


# Reverse psychology & lateral thinking..

Reverse psychology  
and lateral thinking  
help you act *more* like  
a prey animal needs  
you to act, and *less*  
like a predator.



*Lateral thinking means thinking "around"  
the problem or situation and not directly about it.*

Horses (*prey animals*) are not direct line thinkers, they think laterally. People (*predators*) are direct line thinkers, they go for what they want in a direct line. This is what makes them so predictable to horses and it's why horses constantly outsmart them. Horses can read us like a book!

When playing with horses, if you use a direct line approach, they'll see what you want and be more inclined to do the *opposite*. This is how they survive predation by doing the opposite of what the predator expects. For example, as soon as your horse sees that your intent is to get him in that little claustrophobic space called a horse trailer, he'll do everything to avoid it. Some horses will start resisting 40 feet from the trailer! Same thing with horses who push on you, won't stand to be saddled, won't stop, won't go, are difficult to pasteworm, clip, trim, etc., they will not allow themselves to be put in a threatening or vulnerable position by a predator.

## *Using Lateral Thinking*

Let's say you want your horse to step on something with one foot because you're advancing your communication skills. Or you want him to go over a jump, cross a stream, get into a trailer, etc. You have to pretend that this is *not* the most important part of the exercise! If you concentrate more on the principle, the *Game(s)* it involves, and on the quality of the horse's response and respect for you, you'll get it done a lot faster than if you just try to make your horse do it!

For example, put a frisbee on the ground for your horse to step on. Instead of going right to it and trying to get him to step on it (causing resistance and avoidance times ten!) think about spiraling in on the frisbee and then change directions with an *Indirect Rein* and keep repeating this. It won't be long before your horse just puts his foot on the frisbee and you can quit and relax. But try to ride straight up and stick his foot on it the very first time and nine out of ten horses will do everything but that.

Before you try to squeeze a horse into a trailer for the first time, go lateral. Squeeze him through, over and under everything you can – jumps, narrow spaces, creeks, bridges, tarps on the ground, hanging tarps, etc. He'll start to understand the principle, become more and more confident with your strange requests, and loading into the trailer will feel like a game instead of a threat.

## *Reverse Psychology*

A friend once told me that when he went to catch his horses they all took off to the other side of the pasture. It was a big pasture too, the kind you don't fancy running all over to catch recalcitrant horses! So he thought about the reverse psychology concept. He wanted to chase those horses and rope them, but instead, he did the opposite. He sat down in the grass. Then he laid down. It barely took a few minutes and those horses came galloping over to see what was going on! He laid there and let them sniff and wonder and relax, with no intention of catching them. Then he petted them all, put a string around one horse's neck and happily walked off! The more you try to catch horses, the more they try to escape. Learn when to *approach* and when to *retreat*.

It's hard for people to do the opposite of what they feel they need to do, but when dealing with prey animals you need to learn this because it's what you usually need to do! Just when you feel like getting tight and mad, you should probably smile, relax and pet the horse. Just when you feel like catching him, you should probably turn your back on him and walk away. Just when you feel like going one step further, you

should probably retreat and build his confidence and curiosity.

Reverse psychology and lateral thinking help you act more like a prey animal needs you to act, and less like a predator.

### *A more natural way of achieving your goals*

One of the most common questions we get now that *Natural Horsemanship* attracts people involved in competitive endeavors is: "But how does all this relate to dressage, cutting, jumping, reining, cow working, polo, gymkhana, roping, barrel racing, eventing, driving, etc..."

Natural Horsemanship is not something you do *instead* of a particular horse sport, it's just a different approach to achieving those same goals with your horse.

Let's put it another way: You go to school and university to learn medicine. After that you might specialize and become a heart surgeon. This *Savvy System* is like going to school and university to become a *Horseman*. After this, you might specialize in dressage, reining, cutting, or colt starting.... can you see how it works? First you have to get very good at *horsemanship*, and with my system I'm redefining what that means because it's become a lost art.

This program teaches you to become so good with horses that whatever you choose as your ultimate specialization is an easy transition. It's easy because you know how to communicate with your horse in an intricate way, with feel and finesse, mentally and emotionally, not just physically. It's only hard when you don't have the right foundation, nor the qualities of a real Horseman. I want you to know *how* to teach your horse everything, no matter what "costume" you end up wearing.

### *Mental and emotional wrecks*

The problem with the level of horse savvy today is that many people competing in a certain discipline can do almost nothing else but that. Their horses have resistances and problems that are so widespread they have become quite commonplace. Things like grinding teeth, switching tails and pinned ears are a dead giveaway of a horse's mental and emotional distress. If these horses were people, they'd be in mental institutions. They are mental and emotional wrecks but people are simply not aware of the severity of this behavior. They think it's just disobedience and resistance and resort to more force, more discipline, more of the same... and sometimes drugs or surgeries. If that still doesn't work the horse is ruined, sold or destroyed. They don't realize he's had a mental and emotional breakdown.

I want you to know that it doesn't need to be like this. Harmony with horses is attainable as long as you invest the time to learn how to do it, to get enough *savvy*. That's why I've put this system together, the first three *parts* of which are the foundation. It's what every horse lover should know about horses.

### *What does "no resistance" feel like?*

Once you achieve the *Refinement Level*, you're going to be amazed at how incredible your horse will feel to you. He'll be so soft and willing that moving him will feel like pushing a toy boat around on water. This is what "no resistance" feels like in your hands and to your seat and legs. He'll have so much respect and trust he won't argue your requests. He'll have impulsion, where *go* will equal *whoa*. You'll be able to elicit any gait with the smallest of squeezes, and reach an impressive stop just by relaxing a little and tightening your fingers on the reins. Turns will be fluid

because every "wheel" is balanced. You'll be able to do simple and flying lead changes with ease and accuracy. Finally, your horse will be able to carry *Vertical Flexion* and a *Soft Feel* through all gaits and maneuvers, never feeling more than four ounces of pressure on the bit. You and your horse are now a trainer's dream! You've got your horsemanship act together and all you need is the guidance on where to take it.

The mistake we tend to make is to think that unless we're roping, riding circles and shoulder-ins, running barrels, cutting cows, jumping jumps, and hitting polo balls day-in day-out, we're not training for our sport! There is no greater misconception and no quicker way to ruin a horse. What you learn in this system is dressage, it is polo, it is cow work. It just looks different from what everyone else is doing because it uses horse psychology and techniques that make sense to the horse! Through this system you are actually training yourself and your horse to a very high degree, and with a great honoring of the horse.

### *Get the ingredients better*

Flying changes don't get better by doing them over and over. You need to work on the *ingredients*. If you get each ingredient of the flying change better, you'll get better flying changes. Everything you do with a horse is training him in some way and teaching him to be calmer, smarter, braver and more athletic in every way. Every forward, backward, right, left, up and down maneuver you do is a rehearsal for specialization because these are the only six things a horse can do. Now it becomes a matter of how well you can do it.

### *Cross Training*

My world-class cutting horse jumps, works cows, ropes and even does dressage. My young Trakehner warmblood works cows, ropes, does dressage, plays polo and jumps Olympic cross country courses with ease. My wife's dressage horse works cows, jumps.... are you getting the picture? Even though you want to specialize, the best thing you can do is "cross train" your horse. He needs it in order to stay mentally, emotionally and physically sound. Whatever you do, you need to keep your horse's needs in mind.

With cross training, your horse becomes more mentally and emotionally strong; it takes away the stress and boredom for him and he gets his sparkle and enthusiasm back. He also becomes so much more athletic. How many horses have you seen blow up or go sour on the arena, on a cow, the polo field, the barrels? It happens all the time because people are over-focused and don't realize what the horse is going through.

My dream is that many of you will one day excel in competition at the highest level, and have a horse that enjoys it as much as you do. That at the age of 15, the horse is better than he was at 7. There are now some PNH students doing just that, winning in cutting, dressage, campdrafting (Australia), endurance, reining and trail classes with horses that are calm, smart, brave and athletic because they've been solidly developed with this system.

### *Here's the formula:*

Horsemanship first, sportsmanship second. If there are cows involved, then it's horsemanship first, cowmanship second and sportsmanship third.

You can't fail if you practice perfectly and if your horse is your true partner. Whatever you do, keep it natural for your horse.