

[*Home](#)

[*Sitemap](#)

[*SEARCH THE SITE](#)

[*Horse History](#)

[*Horseman Tips](#)

[*Horsemanship](#)

[*Amazing Horse Hoof](#)

[*Horse Anatomy Pictures](#)

[*Rope Halters](#)

[My Random Horse](#)

[Thoughts](#)

[*Tying A Horse](#)

[*Bosal/Hackamores](#)

[*Bad Horsemanship](#)

[*Misc Horse Info](#)

[*Trailer Loading](#)

[*Training Videos](#)

[*Hobbles](#)

[*Horse Articles](#)

[*Health and Medical Info](#)

[Horse & Rider Fear](#)

[Opposition Reflex](#)

[*Answers to Questions](#)

[*Cowboy Wisdom](#)

[*Cookie Recipe for Horses](#)

[*Horse Jokes](#)

[*Cowboy Weather](#)

[*Sites and Links](#)

[*A Horse's Prayer*](#)



Horse's love it when their owner's understand them.

Horsemanship is about the horse teaching you about yourself.

Bucking	First Horse - New Owner	Kicking
Herd Behavior	Introducing New Horse to Herd	Hobbles
Hoof and Feet	Horse Behavior	Misc Answers
Mouthing and Nips	Mules	Rearing
Spooking and Sacking Out	Stall Behavior	Stallions and Studs
Training New Horse	Trailer Loading	Tying or Pulling

Bucking:

You are causing this by being too easy on the horse. You have to understand horses better to understand this. Read my web site about herd behavior, you and this horse is a herd of two and you are either higher than her or lower than her. You have let her think you are lower by letting her get away with this. As she gets older, she will get bigger and stronger, then you will be in real trouble. Stop this behavior NOW or you will set this horse up to be abused later for being mean. If this horse turns her butt to you, have a rope or something and whack her butt HARD, this will scare her and she will run off, then she will learn that she cannot do that and will be a better horse. If she pins her ears, then back her away and make her move away from you, that will tell her you are higher and she has to show you respect.

Lots more going here than what you are seeing, you keep describing this horse as if he has the problems, he does not, it is you. All horses run, buck and do the same things that you are describing, learn ONE thing, a horse is a horse and that is all they know how to be. You say he is running off on you bucking, I say you going too fast and not giving enough direction to stop this from happening, "direction is better than correction". The horse does not want to run since it is not sure what will happen and it gets scared and nervous. BTW, your rope halter is tied wrong, this is "attention to detail", read my rope halter page on my site. Don't try and get this horse to run, only walk in comfortable areas and ride in very familiar areas, just slow walks, nice easy stops, turns and back ups. YOU are teaching this horse to buck by letting it buck and causing it to buck since you are trying to go too fast. "the slow way is the fast way" don't rush it or the horse will get nervous and scared. Lots of round pen work, NOT just chasing the horse, send the horse out, trot, canter and walks then have it come to you and follow you, you want more time on following you then you pushing it and making it run. lunge the horse in the round pen with a rope and rope halter on, if the horse bucks, (this is when you want to try and make it buck) so you can take the head away and make it STOP bucking so the horse leans that you can stop him when he bucks. What you are showing him now by getting bucked off is that YOU can't stop him, therefore you are not in charge, so you are not a good leader, so he

*Photos Rick and Horses

Clinics on Request

*Contact Rick



**Think Like A Horse
By: Rick Gore**

[Move to top of page](#)

should not trust you or listen to you. A horse will not listen unless and until he has too. Forget the love and thinking that this horse cares about you, it is a horse, it only cares if he is higher or lower than you, if is higher then he will push you and treat you like a lower herd member(not being mean but thinking he is protecting you), this is not good, many will see this as love, it is not, it is dangerous and sets you and the horse to fail. As for the horse facing you and side stepping when you round pen him, he is telling you, you cannot make me run, you are weak, you are not a strong leader, you cannot make me listen, you are not higher than me - I agree with the horse! And that is why he running off and bucking with you, the exact same reasons.You need to read my entire web site, invest the time so you understand horses better or you will make this horse worse, a better bucking, more disrespectful and will end up getting hurt and then the horse will get blamed.

Well this is definitely not a horse problem. Being retired Air Force, I have had my dealings with cocky fighter pilot types, so that is a hard habit to break and I suspect that is what attracted you to him in the first place. If you can't convince him, ain't no reason for me to try. I would only suggest that he do his best to set the horse up for success. I normally don't promote wearing a horse out to train them, but with confirmed buckers, that need to be trained, there are a few extreme techniques and I would only do them if it means the difference between a horse going to slaughter or having a bad life if it is not fixed or maybe if a some old fighter pilot refuses to admit he is not as young as he once was. Email me on my web site so I can send you some ideas in private so I don't have others reading this and trying to use this to stop minor bucking that is more often caused by rider error and not by a life of abuse and years of training to buck.

As for things to help this horse, hobble train him and have he wear hobbles every day so he learns to be restrained (the horse not your husband). Also do lots of tying this horse up where there is lots of activity, tie him at the busy place, during the busiest time. Expose him to lots and lots of sensory from people, machines, traffic, other horses, buildings, etc.. Have him wear a saddle a lot. Any time he out or tied or walking, saddle him up, after he gets good at that, tie things on the saddle, a sack of grain, a tire, boots, water jugs with water, anything that has weight, make him balance, make him carry a saddle and other weight so he will get desensitized to having weight and saddle on him. Make sure you prepare him for this and don't just throw it on him and make him buck and blow up, which he may do, but try and set him up with good pressure and release so he will accept this and not fight it, but if he insist on fighting it, let him. Tie him, put it on and let him blow, when he gets tired, walk him, round pen him, bring him back and tie him some more, he has to learn that bucking gets him nothing but tired. Over time, if you do this everyday, he will soon figure out, it is easier to not buck than to buck. Then you will be on your way. After he is good with hobbles, tie him and hobble him, it needed and then saddle and pile the weight on. The trick is to figure a way to secure thing to the saddle so it won't come off if he blows, he has to learn that blowing up does not get things off him, then he will see no point in doing it.

Like your hubby, I love challenges like this, especially if someone tells me it can't be done, if it is too dangerous or I am too old. So since you can't stop him, help him, teach this horse bucking is hard work, bucking gets you nothing, and it is your choice. After you do all this, the chances of him doing with a person will be less and at least will be less forceful. I would NOT try and stop him from bucking, I would ignore it for a while and just pet him when he stops, then let him blow and pet when he stops, as he gets better on his own, then you can start correcting when he bucks and see if he respects your command to stop, then once you get him doing that, then your odds are better when you get on him and try to command him to stop. First you have to make sure he knows what you want when tell him to stop and at least know that he does know how to stop and will stop when you ask. The correction for bucking needs to be jerking the head to his butt, so when you are in the saddle and jerk or pull one rein, he will know what you want. Trying to teach this in the air is not a good plan, even for a pilot. There ain't no HUD on the back of a horse and the ejection seat tends to go out without much warning. I guess you could get him to wear a parachute but don't think he will have time to deploy it, but it might make you feel better. :)

Good luck,

QUESTION: I am a 52 yr. old grandmother. I have been around horses all my life and have ridden almost everything. I bought a little spotted saddle horse, with the intentions of her being my "retirement" horse. She is a coming 6 yr.old. Had 30 days training at 3 yr.s old. Not ridden a whole lot. Was off for the last 20 months

after foaling. She is very sweet tempered and good on the ground. I rode her several times before purchasing her. I now ride her indoors in an arena, as right now in Wisconsin, it's too cold to be outside. She has never been ridden indoors. Last week, I tacked her up and walked her around the arena. After 10 minutes of walking, I decided to get her to move out. Supposedly she is gaited, and I wanted to see what she has. About 4 strides into it, she started bucking, and then reared. I was taken by surprise, and I did get unseated. I got up and got right back on and rode some more, and put her into a trot with no problem. But, then I had to go to the ER, because I was spitting up blood. I now have 3 broken ribs, and a husband who wants me to sell her because he is afraid I'll get hurt again. I don't want to do that! The previous owner told me she bucked just one time; when she was coming out of a creek. She was 3. Other than that, no problems, other than she is very rough around the edges when it comes to reining, but she seems very eager to please, and willing to learn. I have put this mare through all kinds of things on the ground..walking over tarps and boards, exposing her to balloons, balls, opening an umbrella in front of her, dogs barking, plastic bags, all kinds of stuff, and she takes it in stride. The day she bucked there was nothing any different than it ever is. Same place to ride, same tack. 2 days before I had ridden her in the arena with other horses, and she did great. She never pins her ears, or shows aggressive behavior. She is pastured with my other mare, an wise old 25 yr. old quarterhorse. She is never stalled. She is on very good quality hay, and gets grained at night. Other than just getting back on her to ride, right after I was bucked, I have not done anything with her, because my doc ordered me to not ride for 2 weeks. I am not afraid of getting bucked off, it's not the first time, but, at my age, it really sucks!!! I think this horse has great potential, and she has so many great qualities that I think she is worth another shot. When I go back to ride her, I would like some fresh ideas, or some tips on things I can do to show her that bucking is unacceptable. Thanks!!!! Geri

[image: Horses-Behavior-Issues-3329/2009/01/geri-star.jpg](http://www.thinklikeahorse.org/index-15.html)

ANSWER: Sorry I call the he in the email and then saw it was a mare, so forget the he she part. :)

Well, I hear a lot of things and I have to disagree with a few of them. First this is not the horse's fault. You did not set this horse up for success. You rushed the horse, you took short cuts, got in a hurry and paid a price. Lucky you only got a few ribs broke, you could be dead or in a wheelchair. So feel lucky and don't get rid of the horse because of your mistake and your failure to take the time to make sure he was ready for what you asked him to do. I hear all the time about how good a horse is, how willing he is, how much he loves you, NONE of that matters. Your horse is a horse and that is all he knows how to be. He cannot throw you or hurt you unless you put yourself in a situation where it can happen. Don't blame the horse for anything, the horse has no choice in this, you bought him, you got on him, you went too fast, you did not prepare properly, you set the horse up for failure and the horse had no choice.

It sounds like you did good sacking out, but this horse bucked from fear, pain or disrespect. I was not there so I can't say what caused it, but I can say that you caused it, you forced it and you make it happen, the horse had no choice. You and others may think the horse had a choice not to buck, and maybe he did, but he did not have a choice not to be there, he did not have a choice to tell you he was not ready, he probably did tell you he was not ready and you did not hear it or ignored it. Horse do things out of reaction when scared or not prepared. This horse told you he was not ready for what you asked, he told you the only he knew how. He did not throw you, you fell off, you failed to stay on, you did not have control of her, you did not read the signs before she bucked, you were not paying attention, I can always give 10 reasons on how something was the persons fault and yet everyone still wants to blame the horse. If you get anything from my answer, you horse did nothing wrong and it was not her fault. Accept responsibility for setting up and causing this.

So what do you do, you start from the ground up. You said you had all this experience, sorry but experience means nothing if you don't use caution, pay attention and don't set the horse up for failure. Once you admit that you caused this then you can start taking steps to prevent it and to set the horse for success. Horses like routine and habit. Do the ground work in a small area, teach the horse to be secure in this area, then do short rides in this same area, then do short rides at a walk, once the horse gets GOOD and walk and stops, then in a week or

so do trots to walk, then walk to stop, the trot to stop, once the horse is good at that, then to trot to canter then back to trot, then canter to walk, then canter to stop, it all takes time to set the horse up to know what to expect, no surprises and routine. You said the horse was off for 20 months, that is a life time to a horse you basically got on a new horse that was never ridden and to quote you "I decided to get her to move out. Supposedly she is gaited, and I wanted to see what she has" WELL YOU SAW WHAT SHE HAS, not the answer you wanted. "If you get the wrong answer with a horse, you asked the questions wrong."

If you were riding her bareback that may have caused bucks, no saddle means you butt bone is in direct contact with her spine, a saddle protects the spine and distributes weight better over a larger area of the horse, so not too much pressure is on one spot. The more you ride short rides the more the horse will get better and will not be so, what you call hot. She is just confused, and still testing each person since she got your fiance off, now she knows she can, so she will try more not with every person. Only put experienced and good riders on her in a small and enclosed arena or round pen so she will not want to run off or buck so much. Time is the key, the more you spend the better you both get.

Slow down, start over and set the horse up for success. "If you take the time it takes, It takes less time".

Easy Sparky!, if you read your email you said you had been around horses your entire life and have ridden everything. So please forgive me if I misunderstood this. As you not falling off a horse since you were 8 years old, I guess that record is past tense now. You now want to say the only mistake was believing what someone told you. Anyone that has been around horse people for a day or a year would know, that you put your life in your hands when you believe what others tell you, as you did. As for chewing your butt you see things as you want to see them, I did not call you names or even attempt to chew you out. You still want to see this as NOT your fault, you did nothing wrong but believe someone else is to blame. Sorry my dear, wrong again, you got on a horse that was not ready or safe and wanted to be "cowgirl or cowboy up" and like many people have found out, you are not as good as you think you are and a horse will show you that anytime you think so. There is not a horse in world that I ride that can't throw me, I know this, so I spend time and try and prevent it from happening. NO one can make you look like an idiot, but you. So go ahead and keep believing that you did not fall off and that you decided to jump or got thrown. You hit the ground and could have been killed. How you got there is not real important. Why you got there should be your concern. And if you keep wanting to believe you did not fall off, you were thrown off, all you did was believe someone or it is my fault for telling you what you need to hear, so be it. I can not help people with egos that want to make this about them, their egos, whether they look like an idiot or who don't want to hear what they need to hear. Perhaps had someone told you this before, you would not have had to learn this lesson, I say that with reservation, since I am not sure you learned a lesson. The fact that you got back on the horse after it bucked, and were so proud of that fact, shows that you still believe the old tough girl/cowboy crap that gets people hurt and gets horses a bad name.

Horses pay for people's mistakes. Your husband's first thought was get rid of the horse. Maybe he knows you better and figures you won't get it and will "get back on" "show the horse who is boss" and get yourself killed.

You also said you had professional trainers tell you the same thing I told you but nicer. I ain't taking your money, you are not paying me and I am not in this to help people that don't want to listen, I do this to try and help HORSES! I don't think I can help your horse since he is stuck with you. So you do what you want, that has always been your option. I gave you my take on the situation from what you told me, if you don't like the answer, don't do it and don't ask the question. Your ranting response shows that you think you know it all, you will not accept that you caused this and will always find others or the horse to blame.

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

From what you told me the horse is smart and is doing what horses do. He is telling you that he does not care about getting his ass run off chasing barrels or chasing cows. You can send this horse to 100 trainers, this problem has been caused by you and you can fix or give him to someone who wants a good horse just to ride and run and compete all the time. You call this his job, it is not his job it is you goals and your wants and you are using the horse get it. No horse wants to be ran and worked all the time. In earlier years of horses a horse was ridden

more, spent more time with, cared for by the owner, and taken care of better since the horseman's life depended on it. A horseman would rarely run their horse at full speed from concern of hurting the horse and preventing it from being ridden. Now in the world of time, awards, medals and other prizes, all of which mean nothing to a horse.

This horse may not like his job since it hurts, just because we can't see it or a vet can't find it, does not mean the horse is not in pain. I walk around with pain almost everyday, but not many know about unless I tell them. The horse may be telling you the only he can. Or he may just be saying enough is enough, I do not like getting kicked, ran, spurred, having the reins pulled on, or whatever it is that has made him sour to the ring.

As I said at the start you owned the horse, you caused this behavior and only you can fix it. You can't expect your horse to change if you continue to do the same thing. By you not wanting to ride the horse, the horse gets what he wants. If the horse respected you and saw you a good fair leader then he would not buck.

It sounds like you have TRIED to give the horse what you think he needs, massages, training from stranger, medical check ups, I think the horse needs someone to see the world from his eyes, see how much fun it is living his life, some who thinks like a horse and if they were a horse would they want to be used or treated like he is being treated. People think giving a horse a good home, nice stall, blanket, good hay, good vet care and grain means they are being good to the horse. A horse would much rather be loved, spent time with relaxing and grazing like horses do in a herd. None of that other stuff means much to a horse. Instead of continuing to send your horse away for strangers to force their will on him for months at a time, either change what you do with him and how you spend time with him or give him to a good home where a he can relax, be a horse and not have so many JOBS.

If you don't enjoy riding him, how or why would expect him to enjoy having you ride him. You like many horse owners want to make this a horse problem. It is not, your horse is horse and only a reflection of you and what you do to him. The more you understand horses the more you understand yourself. I say it all the , when people describe their horse, they describe themselves.

Probably not the answer you wanted to hear, but that is my take from what you have told me.

Easy Sparky!, if you read your email you said you had been around horses your entire life and have ridden everything. So please forgive me if I misunderstood this. As you not falling off a horse since you were 8 years old, I guess that record is past tense now. You now want to say the only mistake was believing what someone told you. Anyone that has been around horse people for a day or a year or more would know, that you put your life in your hands when you believe what others tell you, as you did. As for chewing your butt you see things as you want to see them, I did not call you names or even attempt to chew you out. You still want to see this as NOT your fault, you did nothing wrong but believe someone else is to blame. Sorry my dear, wrong again, you got on a horse that was not ready or safe and wanted to be "cowgirl or cowboy up" and like many people have found out, you are not as good as you think you are. There is not a horse in world that I ride that can't throw me, I know this, so I spend time and try and prevent it from happening. NO one can make you look like an idiot, but you. So go ahead and keep believing that you did not fall off. You hit the ground and could have been killed. How you got there is not real important. Why you got there should be your concern. And if you keep wanting to believe you did not fall off, you were thrown off, all you did was believe someone or it is my fault for telling you what you need to hear, so be it. I can not help people with egos that want to make this about them, their egos, whether they look like an idiot, who don't want to hear what they need to hear. Perhaps had someone told you this before, you would not have had to learn this lesson, I say that with reservation, since I am not sure you learned a lesson. The fact that you got back on the horse after it bucked, and were so proud of that fact, shows that you still believe the old tough girl/cowboy crap that gets people hurt and gets horses a bad name.

Horses pay for people's mistakes. Your husband's first thought was get rid of the horse. Maybe he knows you better and figures you won't get it and will "get back on" "show the horse who is boss" and get yourself killed.

You also said you had professional trainers tell you the same thing I told you but nicer. I ain't taking your money, you are not paying me and I am not in this to help people that don't want

to listen, I do this to try and help HORSES! I don't think I can help your horse since he is stuck with you. So you do what you want, that has always been your option. I gave you my take on the situation from what you told me, if you don't like the answer, don't do it and don't ask the question. Your ranting response shows that you think you know it all, you will not accept that you caused this and will always find others or the horse to blame.

It sounds like you are doing ok. Don't let her get release when she bucks, she needs to get more pressure for bucking. On my horseman tips page I talk about Bucking strap and nightlatch, put one on your saddle and it will help you ride out the bucks until you can correct her and put pressure on her to stop her. If you have one hand on the bucking strap, your other hand needs to work the one rein. Pop it and get her to tilt her head to it, that way she cannot buck as hard and you will be making her think bucking is not good and gets her more work.

If you have a round pen, put her in it, ride her at a canter, after a good warm up and get her out of this habit, this has worked for her in the past so she is trying it on you, run her butt off a bit and it will stop. If you don't have a round pen, put her in the smallest arena or enclosed area you have. Ask for a canter, and as soon as she tucks her head, pull/hold ONE rein only, that will cause her head to tilt to the side so she cannot buck as good or as hard, keep that one rein tight until she gives and put her head up, all the while keep asking for the canter and put pressure to run, anytime her head goes towards the ground or tucks to buck, ONE rein only pull and tilt her head (pop it) until it comes back up. After she runs a lap or so, let her walk, then trot and into a canter again, after a couple of canters with no bucks or head tuck, let it go for the day and do the same thing the next day in a few days it will go away.

Question: i am 24 years old, i have had my own horses since i was 9, they have all been backed but i have enjoyed schooling them to a higher standard. recently i have been helping out with a lovely 5 year old cob cross mare, she is in a feild with others at night then brought in at night and stabled. she has a lovely gentle nature and is great to handle in the stable. she was backed a year ago, by this i mean she was lunged and long reigned with no problems. she was great at first and took someone getting on her back in her stride. however that is as far as it went when asked to trot she shakes her head and starts to buck and rear this can be just from hearing a voice command to trot. i lunge her in her saddle with no problems but as soon as someone gets on her back and she is asked to trot either by the person riding or lunging she starts bucking. im at a loss as to what i should do, do you have any ideas?

Answer: It sounds like the horse is either confused or does not respect you. Either way you need to spend more time confirming what you want from the horse so you are sure the horse is not confused. If you can lunge on the ground then you should be able to lunge with a rider on. If this horse understands your commands and instructions, then it should listen with or without a rider. Make sure the horse is good without a rider, make sure it knows walk trot and canter cues well and does them consistently then add a rider with no reins, and no instructions from the rider, just have the rider to be a passenger, then lunge the horse as normal. Most issues are fear or lack of respect, both create the other so make sure what is the real issue and help the horse find the right answer. The horse is telling you something, either you are not clear, it is confused, it is scared, it does not respect you, something, so listen to the horse and help her find the right answer.

Q: We rescued a little 3 to 4 year old mare last year. She had been severely starved and abused. After almost a year she is a different horse but...

In training her, we have come to realize that this mare was used as bucking stock and was abused afterwards. The most probable reason she was taken away from the bucking arena is that she falls over if you don't get bucked off.

Other than bucking her out with a mannequin on top of her, which might not be good when she falls over, or using a live person who could get seriously hurt, do you know of any other options?

A: You have to teach this horse that bucking is the wrong answer and bucking only get her tired. Do lots of ground work with saddle and if she bucks correct her, show her you can stop her, teach her what you do to get her to stop, so when you ride her she knows what you do to stop her, she knows that you can stop her and she knows bucking is not the right answer.

If she is only 3 and was already used as bucking horse, she was started way too young and may be in pain from riding too early. let her grow and heal until five. In the mean time do lots of ground work, handling, and teach her that you are lead horse and leader, bucking is like

kicking or biting, it is a sign of disrespect and resistance. The more show the horse that you will not allow this, the less likely he will buck when you start riding him.

Read my web site so you really understand horses differently.

[Move to top of page](#) ↑

First Horse - New Owner Question:

Hi Rick, I am writing to get your thoughts and opinion. I've had several people at the barn tell me that I should sell Tino and buy an older and more trained horse because it is their opinion that he is too much for me as I don't have enough experience, and time to train him, etc. What are your thoughts? You have been around Tino and I wanted to know what your thoughts are. Do you think Tino and I are doing okay? Do you think I am capable of handling him and training him? Should I just ignore these people? I really want to do what is best for Tino, and just selling him off to someone because I'm a dumb-ass doesn't seem right. It seems selfish to me. He didn't ask me to buy him. I know you will be honest with me and I would really appreciate knowing what you think because I know how much you care about horses. Answer: For some reason I lost this email and just found it, sorry I did not get back sooner. This is tough one. Since it makes no difference to me and I have nothing to gain or lose, I can say keep him and forget what others say or I can say get rid of him since he young and you are not that experienced. But it is not that simple. Both you and Tino have something to lose and gain by your decision. As an experienced horseman I think Tino is a great horse and easy to work. Would I tell someone with little experience to buy him, probably not. Does that mean you should get rid of him, probably not. Should you keep him since I think he is good, probably not. You have to make this decision based of what you know, I can only give you information and what you do with it, how you use it and what happens in the future is all up to you. I rarely tell someone to get rid of a horse no matter what, I think if you buy a horse, you buy to entire deal and if you went too fast, did not think it through, did not do your homework or suddenly now think you are over your head, none of those reasons are good enough to make a horse pay for what you did. Now if this horse was attacking you, kicking you, breaking bones and you could not even lead him, then I might say it is better for the horse and you to get rid of him. I do not think you are in danger, unless you do something that puts you in danger, like taking Tino running down a busy hwy, that would be stupid and dangerous and then I would tell you that you are too stupid to own any horse. :) That is not the case. You called yourself a dumb-ass, all new horse owners are ignorant about the many aspects of horses, normal learning curve. If you jumped into a class in college on advanced physics and then called yourself a dumb ass, which would be the same situation. You, or anyone else can't expect to learn about horses in a year or two, that is why so many people fail with horses. Can you imagine going to Harvard and saying I want to have a Doctor's Degree in Space Travel in one year and then went out, bought a space ship and then got frustrated since you could not fly in your space ship? Same thing with a horse. In some way the space ship is easier since it is not living, fearful, survival driven, emotional and has a mind of it's own, like a horse does. So, when people claim to know about horses, give advice about how and what others should do with horses, it is really easy to pick out the ones that don't have a clue. Anyone that really understands horses knows it is not the horse that is dangerous. It is not the horse that has problems. It is not the horse that is the problem, it is the owner/operator/handler. In the horse world (of mostly women) the answer to problems is a different horse, a different saddle, different feed, different stalls, different equipment and everything but, taking the time to learn, grow and become a horseman. The first options are easy and fast, becoming a good horseman takes years of commitment, dedication, time, maybe a few hard knocks and investment. One way is easy and screws the horse over, the other way makes you better, teaches you many life lesson and makes you appreciate your horse, your accomplishments in horsemanship and teaches you more about horses than all the know-it-alls in the world. So it may sound like I am trying to talk you into keeping your horse, I am not. I don't want you to keep him from what I say or what I believe. Just like a don't want to MAKE a horse do something. I want to make a horse WANT to do something very different than making him do it. If a horse wants to do something it is a choice, shows trust and understanding. If I make a horse do something it only shows I don't have the knowledge or understanding to help the horse to understand and to want to do it. When people listen to trainers or barn experts, they don't make educated decisions with commitment and dedication. Listening to others gets frustrated horses and horse owners, You making an educated decision gets people that want to learn, want to grow, want to become better for themselves and their horse. Another thing about people that are quick to say, get rid of that horse are the same people that send their horses to trainers, they

buy horses that are old with lots of training, they search for bloodlines that produce calm horses, so they can be lazy and not take the time to learn. Then when something goes wrong, they can blame the trainer, blame the horse or the horse's past. They accept no responsibility for learning or investing the time, so they pass blame to others or then if they still fail they just sell their horse and get a "better" one. I have owned a car almost my entire life, yet I could build one or fix one. Yet the first thing from most Barn experts is "I have owned horses my entire life." So that statement impresses others that don't know. You can have ten years experience or you have one year experience ten times, a very big difference. Owning a horse does not make a horseman anymore than owning a college would make you smart. I like most all horses and think they are all good, so me saying Tino is a good horse and I like him is not much an endorsement. Your future with him is entirely in your hands not mine, not his and damn sure not the people who are telling you to sell him. With that said, would you be safer with an older horse, maybe. Would you enjoy an older horse more, maybe. Could you get hurt on an older horse, sure. But all of this depends on you, what you do with the horses (regardless of age or training), what mistakes you make, what you do right or wrong, what you rush and go to fast, or if you took your time and invested time. It all comes down to you. Hope this helps, Rick -----

----- No one has a clue about owning a horse until they do it. Being a responsible horse owner means you do things to prepare, learn and increase your odds of success. Since a horse suffers because of what you do or don't do, when you take a horse, you should be somewhat prepared. I know way too many horse owners that want to save and love the idea of a horse, they have never picked a hoof, they don't own a horse trailer, they drive cars, they own no horse gear, most of all they have no understanding of the horse. To me that is unfair to the horse and sets them both up for failure. People think I am hard or too rough and direct with my answers. A horse does not have a voice, it is only a horse and that is all it knows and far too often people who mean well, who want to help and save a horse, end up getting seriously hurt or killed because they want to be nice and kind and when they get hurt or killed, someone wants to blame the horse and put the horse down. I see it far too often and don't have much patience for people that claim to love a horse and send the horse down a road of failure because they jump into something without having a clue. Understanding horses is not that difficult, but it does take time, discipline, work, consistency, trial and error, money, and many other things, it is not like buying fish and feeding them once in a while. So my point is, being new and not having a clue means nothing to the horse, he does not care that you are new or the best horseman in the world, he is only a horse and that is all he knows how to be...it is your responsibility to learn his way, to understand him so you can help him. So excuses, you meaning well, you trying, you doing the best you can means nothing. This horse is going to be a horse regardless of what you do. The faster you get that, the better you both will be. -----

Question: I was really looking for someone with medical knowledge who could help us. If you can't help, I understand. We have an old pony (about 20 years old) He is losing weight and can't gain any weight no matter how much we feed him. His coat hasn't shed in 2 seasons. His stomach is contracting all the time and he has become so thin. There are not many vets around here that do house calls and we can't really afford the expense to pay one to come to our home. We have read online about Cushings disease, but he is not showing all of those symptoms. Could you advise us in any way as to how to help our "gypsy". Thanks for your time. Answer: 20 years is not that old. Lots of things can cause what you are seeing. Lack of exercise, lack of grass hay, bad teeth, not being wormed and many others. As horses get older they do not shed or grow hair as easy, so grooming is more important to help them. If his feet are not done he could be in pain so he walks less, which means he eats less and things go down hill from there. Answer: If this horse has all the grass hay he can eat, a flake of alfalfa once a day, some rolled or whole oats (2 - 3 cups a day) some rice bran maybe a little sweet feed mixed in, this horse will put on weight. If you can't afford a vet, then maybe you are not providing enough of the right feed often enough. Also maybe you should find the horse a home where a vet is available. Putting on weight is not an overnight thing, it may take a few months, but just do it slow and don't try and do too much too fast or you can kill the horse. So do this: worm the horse have the teeth checked give lots of grass hay, 2 flakes morning and night (grass being Oat, Rye, Orchard, etc) give alfalfa hay a flake a day, half morning half at night give 2 cups of oats in morning and 2 cups at night give 1 cup of rice bran morning and night This horse will gain weight if you do what you need to do, you cannot just throw some low quality hay out once or twice a day and expect that to work. This horse should have hay out all the time so she can eat when she wants to and never be hungry and never have to wait for food. -----

QUESTION: I recently purchased a 5 year old Belgian who came to me with poor ground manners. We have been working on teaching her that it is not ok to plow over humans on the lead and to

stand in the cross ties, etc. These things are improving, although, she will still test her limits. She has, however, begun chasing children who come out to the pasture to retrieve their horses. She does not do this to me or other adults. She is very large, weighing over 2000 pounds, and I am concerned with the danger of this situation. Is there anything I should focus on in her handling to help alleviate this problem. I am not in the pasture to do any type of intervention when the chasing occurs. ANSWER: Like most problems, this is a people problem not a horse problem. A horse will not chase something that does not run. If the child cannot stop a horse from chasing it, maybe it should not be in the pasture with many horses. ONLY the person getting chased can stop this, not you. If you are there and do stop it, it means nothing to the horse. A horse will only respect someone it has too respect. You can tell the kid to keep a plastic grocery bag in her pocket and when your horse comes to shake it over her head at the horse. The problem is this is just a cheat and does not address the real problem, which is the kid that is letting your horse chase her, the kid is running from the horse, the kid is not showing the horse it can't chase her, the kid is causing the horse to chase her. All horses are bigger than people, it has nothing to do with size. Your horse may also be protecting the herd or wanting to play....it is obvious that you or the kid being chased does not understand horses or the way they think. This is perfectly normal horse behavior and anyone who understands horse would know this. If a horse kicked you when you took his food, you might see this as the horse is mean or the horse is possess of his food or he has a bad habit..... I would say it normal horse behavior.. A horse is only a horse and that is all it knows how to be, this is NOT a horse problem. Read my site it will help you see horses as they are and understand them better. ----- FOLLOW-UP ----- QUESTION: This is both a people problem and a horse problem! I am fully aware that this can be normal horse behavior. I am also fully aware that it is most likely occurring because the child is not demonstrating to the horse that she is in charge. However, acting disrespectful to any human is not tolerated at our stable and this horse needs to learn this. I was simply looking for any suggestions you might have to assist this horse in learning that she is always sub-ordinate to any human being. And size does make a difference. This horse is gigantic compared to the other horses in the pasture and kids who are normally confident in the pasture are intimidated by her, as are the adults. Even other horses who would normally be more dominant in the field are intimidated by her. And she was the bottom horse in the pecking order at her prior home. I have lots of experience with abused animals and have never identified an animal as mean. Anyone who works with animals on any regular basis would tell you that animals act instinctively and don't have "mean" in their repertoire of behaviors. That is purely a human behavior. And I could care less if this is "normal" horse behavior. It is not acceptable to chase people out of your pasture - ever! I have reviewed your website. And I have to tell you that you rip on people who call their horses names but you do the same thing to people! Telling people they obviously don't know anything about horse behavior is the same thing as calling their horse stupid! It doesn't provide any solutions to the problem. You didn't tell me anything I didn't already know. But thanks anyway. Answer: OK, you are right, if you know so much and are so experienced, then why are asking me questions. This is not a horse problem, we can agree to disagree. I think you are wrong and 99% of all horse problems, including this one, is a people problem. This horse WILL not chase someone that does not run. And you are on such a high horse that you want to get insulted by answer. If you know all that you told me you, then why have you not fixed this? If you fix this, write me back and please explain how you can train a horse not to chase someone when you are not there and the other person runs and is scared of the horses. This will be a new revelation in horse training. You response reminds me of an old saying: "It is hard to get down from your high horse gracefully." And if you don't like my answers or my web site, feel free not to read or ask me questions and don't go to my site. See that is the wonderful thing about being a human, WE have choices and horses do not, which is why "it is never the horse's fault". Good Day! -----

----- QUESTION: Hi, im hoping you might have some advice for me about my mares lameness. About 4 years ago some 'fool' left the field gate open and all the horses ran loose around the surrounding fields.. my mare came back lame on the front left with no obvious reason (no cuts, swellings or heat etc) this went on for a couple of weeks so got the vet out, she was taken in for X-rays and all sorts of injections in her legs and anything the vet could think of (she was at the vets for roughly 2week) eventually the vet just said they had no idea why she was lame and that its perminant. After 5months of lameness she was sound again and fine to be ridden. I continued to ride her fine mainly hacking with some schooling or jumping for about 2 years. Since then i've put her on loan a few times and shes gone lame from what i can gather this is why - 1st time on loan the loaner trotted her on roads for over an hour and she was then lame for 2months - 2nd tome on loan larger rider and constantly ridden in school bending on hardish ground and was lame for 4 months - 3rd time small rider ridden ridden only in school again and was lame for 2/3months.

Each time its the same leg shes lame on, i find that running cold water on it helps but as i said theres no heat or swelling. I was wondering if you have any idea as to what it could be or how i may be able to prevent it so she can be used more, at the moment shes hacked lightly and doing fine though. Shes only ever had a problem with being lame since the day she escaped 4 years ago, before that i use to compete every weekend jumping showing xcountrys etc for 4 years with no problem, shes 14.2hh and 14 now i got her when she was 5 she came from american adventure originaly sold on at 4years to who i brought her off who broke her lightly and i brought her on from there with no problems. I know shes 3/4 quarter horse not 100% what the other 1/4 is. Sorry to ramble wanted to get everthing out. I understand not many replies are now given but any advice will be listened to and i will be greatfull although i also understand i may never get to the bottom of her lameness. Thanks for reading. Regards, Gemma. P.s i've uploaded a picture of her to show her weight and leg build. Shes the bay. image: Horses-702/2009/08/Tina.jpg

ANSWER: There are two types of horses: Those that are hurt and those that will be hurt. My first thought is stop giving her to others so they can hurt her. She has a injury, jumping, running on hard ground and shoes are the worst things for this horse. You said when you left her alone she got better, no shit, she was not carrying an extra 150 lbs, she was not being run, she was not being jumped.... I can't imagine why she got better.... You asked for my opinion and I almost always take the horse's side. This horse can't tell you it hurts, just because you can't see pain does not mean she is better. I hurt a lot of the time when I some things and I don't limp or you would not know it. Just because she is not limping does not mean she is not hurting. Go do some jumping jack on the cement and I bet your feet, ankles or knees will hurt and you may not limp. I say stop jumping her absolutely. That is the worst thing for a healthy horse, it causing pounding, concussions, pressure and puts all 1000 pounds on two small hooves with compounding force. Think about it a horse walks on four hooves to support their weight, you cut that support in half when you jump since the horse lands on two front feet.. if you don't think that is a big deal, go stand on a chair and you jump to the ground with only ONE foot for support, cut you support in half and maybe you will see how much pain it causes, once again, people forget or don't want to think like a horse. How often do you see horses running in the wild, not often. How often do you see them jumping, very rarely if ever. So we do these things 100 times more often and we add a saddle and the weight of a rider, run horses in circles and then wonder why so many horses have leg problems... it is pretty clear to me. You did not say and I hope you are not doing it, but a lot of people deal with this by giving bute to "ease" the pain.. this is abuse in my book, you ride and work a horse in pain, so you give them drugs to hide the pain so the horse won't limp and then later the horse has 5 times the pain and just stands around hurting... So if you stop what you do, the will stop re-inuring this leg. What I say next is not the problem or will not fix the problem, and pictures can be deceiving, but the hoof looks trimmed too low in heel or too long in toe, which might be causing some discomfort and the front right hoof looks too long in the heel, almost club... but again some time pictures to not show what is really there, just something to look at.... not so you can give the horse to someone to jump or run her, I say this to maybe ease some of the discomfort for the horse. Rick ----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Thanks for your reply, shes not used for jumping or competing anymore hasnt been for a couple of years since she went lame again and i realised there could be a weakness so no worries there, just ridden once a week now if that on a hack which lasts no longer than an hour baring in mind i only walk with some trot. She loves being hacked her ears are forward the whole time i wouldnt want to stop doing that unless it really was bad for her. Also it keeps abit of weight off her as she gets really large and is prone to lami. Shes on no drugs although i do think the vet put her on some when she was at the vets 4 years ago. She shows no sign of pain or discomfort other than the lameness but as u said she may not show it. As for the hoofs, i have no idea what they should look like ive always trusted my farrier so ill mention that. Thanks again for your response. Answer:You're welcome. Riding for weight control and short non stressful rides are great...Listen to the horse it will tell you lots of things, most are to busy doing and never listen. Exercise is good, no shoes are good, and not over weight is good. If your shoer, farrier or what you call him understand barefoot horses and barefoot mechanics then he will know how to trim. Some farriers that mainly do shoes, do not understand the difference between a barefoot trim and a shoe trim, so they just trim the same way. A good barefoot trimmer knows the right way to barefoot trim. Not to say your trimmer does not know, but ask questions, educate yourself on the hoof and trims, so you can ask good questions and know if you are getting BS or good answers, ask other farriers for their opinion..... two good horse sayings are: **You don't as a barber if you need a haircut and you don't ask a farrier if your horse needs shoes.... The second is: **No hoof, No horse...(take care of the feet they are very important) Rick Lots of people do clicker training with horses, some videos on youtube about it you can watch. I trained dogs in the military for several years, so that understanding helps me with horses. However, there are big differences in horses and

dogs. Dogs are predators like us and horses are prey, they flee and learn on release. Horses also push and try to move up and only respect a higher and stronger leader. Praise does not work on horses like dogs. Praise to a horse is RELEASE. Very important and hard to learn and use. To tell a horse yes, or that something is the right response I want, you need to release, fast and timing, but release teaches, release of pressure. EVERYTHING IS PRESSURE to a horse, a look, a stance, facing them, touching them, talking to them, all pressure. That is why talking interferes with training. Horses do not talk, they communicate with body language, pressure and release. Really do lots of research on Herd Behavior so you understand horses. Food works for tricks and to help a horse understand what you want, but for riding and long term food is not what makes good horses, strong, consistent, fair and understand is what teaches horse best. As for your horse racing training. Assume the horse has none and start from scratch. If you treat this horse like he knows nothing you will ensure you identify what he knows and that way you teach him the right things so you can ensure a good consistent foundation. You always want to a good safe place to move back to, if you don't start at the beginning you will not have a place to take him when he gets lost or confused. This horse may have been ridden but only to run fast on an enclosed track where it could not go anywhere but in a circle. If you get on this horse and think that it knows how to give to pressure, how to turn, stop or look to you for direction, you will be hurt and surprised. This horse knows nothing and what ever it has been taught has been wrong and only creates confusion to the horse. Confusion makes fear, fear makes lack of trust, that puts a horse in reaction mode, fear, flight mode and then you get thrown, hurt and scared and all your progress goes back tenfold. The slow way is the fast way with horses. Read my entire site so you really understand a horse and see the world as a horse sees it. The is not a dog and does not care or need you, it wants to stay alive and wants to know what is going to happen next so it can feel safe. And no, do not ride or work this horse 200 pounds underweight, let it get some weight, muscle, feel out the new home and surroundings. -----

----- As for you already "mothering" this horse, you are on a road to failure. This horse does not need you to protect it, to bring it food, to keep the chickens, sheep, birds or wolves off it, it has survived for millions of years and has done well without you protecting it's food. It will learn to push the chickens and sheep on its own, just like it will learn to push you..... don't be fooled that this horse will love you or need you or want to protect you or wants to be your friend..... it will only like you and tolerate you if you push it, show it you are boss and act and talk to it like a horse. Watch my videos, you will think my horses love me.... they do not, they tolerate me and respect me so they allow me to do what I want, not because of love, not because I give them a carrot, but because they know I am in charge, I can make them, they have no choice, and they see me as the strongest leader..... NOT LOVE sorry, I know this is a shocker for most.. :) Good luck and pay attention, I assure you, your horse is paying attention and learning your weakness. //END// Follow up: I am direct, many say I wear my feelings on my sleeve, you know what I thinking by looking at me, this works very well with horse and very bad with people. A horse does not want nice or mean, that means nothing, they want specifics, they want to clearly know who is in charge, who the leader and who they have to respect. This is how a horse finds security and safety. My goal is not to make you feel bad, no more than a horse is trying to hurt you when it kicks you. It may be the end result, but I call it like I see it and a horse kicks to tell someone it means what it says. Neither is mean or have ill intent, it just is. The fact that you think I make you feel bad or that a horse is mean or wants to hurt is what YOU see. It does not make it so. A horse is not stupid or smart, it is not mean or nice, it is not aggressive or passive, it is a horse. All horses kick, all bite, all groom each other, all look for comfort. A horse is only the reflection of who handles it. If a horse does right, good or whatever you want to call it, it is because the person communicated good, and made it easy for the horse to find the right answer (no right and wrong in a horse's mind) People want to make all these terms to help themselves and make them seem smart and make it easier on them to cope with what they see in a horse. It is all misunderstanding of the horse. Calling a horse names just gets my goat and pisses me off. I always tell people that those who call their horse names are really describing them self. If you see someone call a horse stupid, stubborn, crazy, hard-headed, mean, scared, jumpy, insecure.....look at the person and I assure all those terms will fit. -----

----- A whip is a cheat (see my article on cheats). If you depend on it, have to have it, and use it all the time, you don't understand what a cheat is. Other common cheats are lead ropes, halters, saddles, carrots, grain, hay and many others. You should not be in a position where you cannot do something with a horse if you loose your cheat. People ride horses bridleless, no head gear and bareback, no saddle, there is not cheats there, unless the person wears spurs and can't ride without them. You are still looking at horse problems as horse issues. It is not. A horse does fine, makes no mistakes, and lives great when no humans are around them or involved. A horse does not ask or need your help,

in fact, most human contact is nothing more than an annoyance and creates work for the horse, so why would they like that, they are very clam animals to survive, they conserve their movement for eating, playing and learning and running from predators. It is against all instincts to run for no reason, so we humans chase them to get them to move. A horse has to know "what is in it for the horse" Stop looking at horses as a pet, a tool or a dumb animal that is here to amuse you or for you to use as you see fit. Look at them as a HORSE. That is what they know, that is what they are, that is where they come from. Once you know them, understand them, act like them and become them, then you will stop fighting with them, forcing them, blaming them and you will both grow. The next time a person calls a horse stupid, inform them that a horse as the brain of a walnut and is much lower in the evolutionary scale than humans. So if humans are so much more advanced than horses, who is the stupid one, the horse or the human that can't even get a walnut brain to do what he wants. Your question screams of confusing and frustration, both terms I would use to describe your horse and I have never met either of you. You are confused and frustrated since you don't understand or think like a horse. Everything I have said here is on my web site, so I tried of re-typing it just to make it easier on someone who does not want to make time to read and study the site. Much like horses get tired of people that confuse them, hit them and don't understand them. I have spent enough time telling you to read my site, your next question needs to be directed to what you read on my site and that you don't understand what it says or what it means. If being a good horseman was easy, everyone would do it and be good at it. -----

----- Q: I €™ve been around €œcowboys € for much of my life. This includes ropers, rodeo folks, barrel racers, etc. NONE of them ever does groundwork. I keep hearing more and more about groundwork, but I find it mind numbing and BORING. Do you do groundwork? If yes, how often and how long? A: Not all cowboys understand or know horses. That is how the term €œCowboy Up € came about. If you don €™t what you are doing, just cowboy up and hand on. As for ropers, rodeo folks and barrel racers, I think you are confusing horsemen with these people. You will rarely see any horsemanship skills at these events, what you see is people that want to win, people that are competitive and people that don €™t care much for their horse, they just use their horse for their needs. Now that I have pissed off some people reading this, what and why is ground work needed €. Read some books on it to really understand it. Basically, and very briefly, if you understand horses, know the way they think, then you understand the importance of ground work. It is nothing more that spending time with your horse, doing horse things, learning your horse, showing and proving to your horse that you know what you are doing, you understand pressure and release, you know how to talk horse, you show the horse you are a strong and knowledgeable leader, you dominate the horse in a non-threatening way, you move the horse, you control his movement, you control his direction, you can stop him, you develop cues that the horse learns to understand, you teach the horse how to read you and what you want and how you ask for it. You determine where the weaknesses are in you and your horse, you see what happens when you push too hard or the wrong way. All of this improves you ability to read and understand your horse, ground work helps you, it makes you learn from your horse, if puts you in a position of advantage and safety so your odds of success is enhanced, which helps the horse since when you fail your horse fails. So when people tell you they don €™t do it or see a need for it, you will know, that they do not know or understand the way of the horse. -----

----- Ok, it sounds like you have done a lot of things but look at this from the horses point of view and change what you are doing. I am not a fan and don't believe in People that talk to horses and then tell owners what the horse said. I think they are rip off people and just take advantage of people looking for answers in all the wrong places. You keep making this a horse problem and I see it as a You problem. I could be wrong but I think if I took this horse out and worked it for about 30 mins you would see a different horse. Any time you put inexperienced people on a horse that don't know what they are doing, the horse pays, he gets confused, he gets very inconsistent cues, he pays for every mistake each new person tries and learns, this gets very old very fast, soon the horse stops trying to look for the right answer, cannot learn since every rider does something different and the rules keep changing, so the horse gives up, it stops trying to learn and learns to stop trying, it gets called sour, it gets called difficult, mean, stubborn and other names. Horses are forced into their lives with no say, they get no choice in who owns them, who rides them, they can't talk so when people don't know how to handle them they just struggle every day not knowing what to expect, what will happen next, and live in constant confusion and fear, confusion creates fear and uncertainty, this creates anxiety, which eventually creates resentment (sour), so the horse is always adjusting will then try and resist all handling, all riding, all people. It is a sad and horrible life for a horse since they are so willing and really just try and get along with the life they are dealt. You think since you do good with four other horses, then this problem must be this horse's fault, I don't believe this. I think the other four

horses have accepted their life with you for some reason, either you do work with them as much, the same way, what ever the reason, all horses are different, all horses need to be handled within their abilities. People want every horse to adjust to their abilities and when they don't they label the horse. Most horses called difficult are really smarter, they have got smarter from poor or bad handling by various people that did not know what they were teaching but taught many bad lessons and over time the horse learns that they are stronger, they are bigger, they can win and defeat people that don't know, so they are actually making the horse into what the horse becomes. There are way too many horses with a past and then they have no future. Their past is made for them by people that don't know and their future is doomed by more people that don't know. -----

---- You say the horse does not do the same problems when you ride, of course not. You know how to ride so the horse knows this and knows it gets consistent cues from you, so it knows what you want and gives it to you, your students do the opposite and the horse gets tired of it. You have owned this horse since it was three and then tell me it was very immature, no shit, it is only a baby, a three old is like a 7 year old kid, very young and learning, a young horse needs to be handled right so it can grow. The horse is 11 and you had it since three, which means you have eight years to screw this horse up or to make it a great horse, you can judge yourself what kind of job you did. But don't blame the horse either way, if it is good you did good, if it is bad, you did bad. I don't think of horses are good and bad, they are just products of their handling. You talk about this horse shooting out of a box (a trailer), that tells me this horse has your number, he knows you are not the boss and he can do what he wants, he has learned you for eight years and knows what he can do, what you can't do and what you can't stop him from doing, so he does what he does because of what you do or can't do. A horse is only a reflection of it's owner and when you get a young horse at three you only have you to blame if the horse turns out bad (not listening, not respecting, refusing to give in, etc). You need to stop making this about the horse and make it about you. Change what you are doing and your horse will change. The horse is stressed and depressed since he does not know the rules, you are looking for answers in all the wrong places and are constantly trying something new and different/inconsistent to try and fix the horse and the problem is you are not being a strong leader and giving this horse good clear direction so he knows you are in charge and he has to listen to you. A horse feels better when they have a leader that TELLS them what to do. They do not do good when they have a bad leader that loves them, that tires to be nice, that keeps trying and never succeeds, that thinks somehow by asking and not making, the horse will somehow love them back and suddenly become the horse they dream about. This horse is in a bad place with YOU. Stop making excuses for his behavior and become a strong leader, give specific direction and accept nothing less, make the rules clear and don't change them for the horse, push this horse so he knows you will not give up, you will not stop and be nice, but will be consistent, direct and assertive. Once you change, your horse will change. He could have already been what you call trust worthy. You want to see this horse as a horse with a past. This horse is a horse, treat him like a horse and not like a horse with a past. It sounds like you are babying him. 30 to 45 days is more than enough time to get a horse over these issues. You said it took 3 months to stop him from trying to kick you when you went in the stall, it should have took about 15 or 20 mins.

Some things you don't want to rush and take your time, but there comes a point that if you continue to take your time the horse knows and thinks you are a weak leader. Turn up the heat on this horse and stop being so easy. You think this horse trust you, I think this horse tolerates you. If he respected you, he would not still be doing these things. -----

----- Like I tell 99% of the people, most horse problems are people problems, they are caused by people, then continued by people, or make worse by people. In the same way, they can be fixed by people, they can be prevented by people, and can be improved by people, but only if the person really understands horses. Everyone wants to use "natural horsemanship" techniques (love, caring and easy training) the problem is natural horsemanship does not work if you don't understand a horse and if you are not willing to treat a horse like another horses treats them. Horse kick each other and bite each other and chase each other, that is what they do. That is how they learn who is higher and who they should trust and follow. Only then will they groom each other, rub on each other and be friends. The problem is most horse owners what the love, rub and friends part and are not willing to do the kick, bite and chase part....IT JUST DOES NOT WORK. No I am saying to kick a horse or bite a horse, but you can accomplish the same thing by moving a horse, putting pressure, making a horse respect you and your space when you tell him to, but will only do that if you are willing to enforce it. Most just threaten to enforce it and the horse knows this and learns this and then slowly starts treating you like a lower horse. A never ending cycle of confusion for the horse. Make yourself better and this horse will get better, this horse is only a reflection of you and what you require of him. -----

----- Question: Our horse is so badly bitten by the others in the paddock that we've stopped riding him because the saddle rubs the wounds raw. Any suggestions? Answer: You did not provide the requested information. With what you told me, build a wall around your paddock, put up hot wire, move the horse out of the paddock, make sure it is big enough so the horse can move away from the horses, sit in the paddock and stop the other horses, wrap the horse in foam, move the horse..... you ask this like I can fix this over an email, not sure how you see this as a behavior issue, sounds like a people issue where the horse pays. -

----- Question: I am 49 years old and have owned horses all my life. I have however never raise a colt. I have a new appaloosa stud colt, I was with him when he was born and he just turned 4 weeks old. I have made it part of my daily routine to pet him and scratch him, in an attempt to gain his confidence. Today, I rubbed a foal halter on his mother and then on him. He stood quietly while I slid it up over his nose. When I started to fasten it he started jumping and struggling. I instinctively held on and let him fight it out for 30 seconds or so and he settled down and let me handle him any way I wanted to. Did I do this right or is he too young? Should I repeat this or should I leave the halter on him awhile. The mare and colt run freely from barn to pasture. I believe it is relatively snag proof. Your advice would be greatly appreciated. Answer: It sounds ok to me, I would not have tried to put it on all the way, the horse let you put put in on, you should have taken that as a try and removed it so the horse could get release. By holding and trying to too fast you crated fear and got in a situation where the horse had to struggle. Had you touched the nose with it and then removed it and then touched it higher and removed it and then put it on and removed it, several times, the colt would never have struggled, it would have known what to expect and would have gotten used to it and not feared it. -----

----- Question: I am 38 years old and have been riding weekly for 2 months. I had a lot of fear when I started from bad experiences as a child when riding. I fell off a horse last week and my teacher, knowing my background, decided to put me on the horse that I am most comfortable and bonded with when riding. Yesterday my horse sat down when me on her three times during the trail ride. This was upsetting to me since having my experience with falling off a different horse the week prior. This was the first time this horse has ever showed this behavior. Why did the horse do that? This horse is in a herd of 15 other horses and spends time in a stall and a pasture. My teacher said that she spent more time in the stall this past week than in the pasture. Please help me understand. Answer: lol, could be lot so things, but what is was not was he was not being mean, he was not trying to hurt you, the was not being bad. There are so many reasons this could have happened, but my guess would be it was hurt, out of shape or weak from not being ridden or it was confused was getting conflicting cues and signals from you so it did not know what to do or it knew that you were nervous and scared and felt that you were tense and not relaxed so maybe in this horse's past he sat down one time and the rider got him, so he remembered and decided to try it with you... my guess is you got off him like you were running from a burning building and a little light went in on his head, and bell went "Ding" and he said holy cow, I just figured out how to get this girl off me, so he did it again, and my guess is you got off again and so the lesson goes, he trained you to get off when he laid down.... They don't call horses "professional people trainers" for nothing... :) If you want to teach a horse to do something make it comfortable for them, if you want to teach them NOT to do something make it uncomfortable for them. So when you get off, you make him comfortable. When a horse sits or TRIES to lay down with me, I make him very uncomfortable, I squeeze, I yell, I raise my hands, I wiggle in the saddle, shake my legs, I act like I just won the lottery and the horse goes holy crap, I better not lay down my rider just went crazy... and then we walk off for a nice ride... :) -----

----- Question: I am 43 years old and have been riding since I was 11. I worked and trained for a couple of facilities in my 20's mostly in the Arab world. I showed in reining and working cow classes myself but then went on to just being a horse enthusiast and enjoying my horses out on the trails and doing some penning with friends. My horses are now 21 and 24 years old and have been in pasture the past 7-10 years. They are sound and healthy and was wondering now that my daughter is 12, is it wrong to pull my 21 year old gelding in from pasture and spend some time with him in the saddle again so my daughter can enjoy him? What are the pro's and cons? My daughter is a beginner rider having taken lessons and been out on the trails. She would just be doing some basic arena work learning to walk, jog, lope and learn some basic fundamentals. I would love to pull him in for the summer for her so she has her own horse instead of always using someone else's. Please give me some advice and direction on doing something like this and if it is advisable. Answer: Lots of options and lots of unknown. The 21 year old would be better since the 24 is getting up there, but it would depend on temperament, ability, attitude of horses, how much time you spend re-teaching, how much resistance the horse shows when ridden again, how willing your daughter

is (your idea or hers) does she want to just run and jump or does she realize that the horse is old and is just an easy ride. You know the horse, you know a whole lot more info than I do. The old saying, "young troopers need old horses" this has been around years since older horses tend to be lazy, less likely to run off, buck or hurt a young inexperienced rider. Older horses tend to be less flighty and less likely to want to fight. However, this old horse has not been ridden every day and has not been exposed to the same things that older horses that are ridden everyday have. You could bring this horse out and it could allow you ride, be soft and show no resistance since it knows you and then may change with your daughter. I would teach your daughter to work it on the ground, spend time with it, develop a relationship, see how they act together, you will see if problems like pushiness, aggressive, biting or kicking happens. Or if they bond like each other and become friends. Too often people think you can pick a path with a horse and then they get stuck since they are unwilling to change as the horse or situation changes. Too many variables, each next step will depend on what happens at each step. So to try and guess at the results at the end is impossible, since the will be determined by what is done with the horse at each step of the way. Go slow, start like the horse has never been ridden, don't over work or push too hard, build a good foundation and decided what to do after you do this... You did what many do, you did not break it down to little steps with lots of release and repetition so the horse would know what to expect and never would have become confused and scared. You created fear instead of removing it. Not a great lesson, but no one got hurt so not a bad day. -----

----- It €™s funny, I would think more women would be more compassionate about this topic. If my wife was pregnant I would have the attitude €œExercise if good for you so go cut the grass €. It probably would not hurt her to cut the grass but most women I know, who are or have been pregnant, don €™t feel good, have swelling in the joints, pain in the internal organs, pressure in parts of the body they did not know they had and not to mention you have emotions and hormones in play more. I try and look at horse €™s like it was me. If I was a horse, what would I want? I agree light riding will not necessarily hurt a pregnant mare. However, when a mare if pregnant they gain weight, this puts more pressure on joints, legs and body. So even when a horse can carries a rider normally it is putting pressure on the back, legs and joints. Now you add the weight of being pregnant and you increase the chance of causing lameness. Pregnant mares have a higher chance of lameness just by being pregnant, now you throw the weight of a rider and you increase the chance of causing lameness. If you end up causing lameness then the mare could be confined to a stall which is not good for her the baby and could cause her to abort if the lameness was serious enough. If the horse gets started, trips, or spooks or falls it could cause or increase the chance of a miscarriage. Pregnant mares sometime get cinchy due to their girth is sensitive and it is uncomfortable. Since this sounds like your first pregnant mare, make sure you check the wormer you are using, some are good for pregnant mares and can harm the foal. I will agree that exercise is good, nice long walks, good pasture turn out and not stalled is all good for the mare. A general rule is if you ride at all, make it light, slow and non-stressful. And only ride for the first two trimesters and no riding in the third. In horses, the baby stays relatively small until the third trimester when the foal really grows. If I was pregnant, I know I have no experience in this, but if, I would not think I would want to be ridden that much, but would enjoy walks, grazing and maybe light short rides. Here is a good link to review about pregnant mares. <http://www.equinecare.50megs.com/catalog.html> -----

----- A tom bit is the worst bit out there, it is very painful and confusing to a horse. Head tossing is normally caused by a horse looking for release or hard hands on the reins. (I have an article on a TThumb bit on my article page, it will explain why this bit is so bad) Ride the horse with just a halter I bet it stops. A tie down is another cheat for trying to fix the horse and not fixing yourself. When you get better your horse gets better. Have a good experienced rider try and ride the horse if the head tossing stops then that will confirm it is you. I have ridden many head tossers and then I ride them and it stops. I am soft on the reins and pay close attention to any pressure I give on a rein. This is also caused by insecure riders who are scared and tend to ride tight reined and want to hold the horse back since they think it will run off, this will get a horse to toss as well. First a light tom thumb is like saying I saw a light elephant. The TT bit is one of the worst pain producing bits out there. Many people think it is a snaffle and it is not. It is a leverage bit with a break in the mouth piece, but most people think since it has a break that it is a snaffle. If I could get rid of the worst bits the TT would be one of them. A twisted wire snaffle is a snaffle but one of the worst snaffles for pain. It causes it pain. I don't blame this horse for running, he wants the rider off and wants the pain to stop. So it makes perfect sense what he is doing. I always tell people that if you can't ride your horse in a halter, then you should not be riding it in a bit. A halter ensures you know how to control the horse without pain, it makes you learn to communicate with the horse verses make him do things with pain. I don't use bits, don't promote them and

whenever I work with a horse the first thing that goes is the bit and then I get to the other issues, which normally immediately become less as the bit goes away. Now I know that any bit can be soft or hard, depending on who is hold the reins, so the other rider you talk of may be scared or nervous of the horse, so her fear causes her to hang on and pull the bit harder thinking that is how she can control him, this is a mistake of many riders, new and old. A bit does not control a horse, never did and never will, a horse will run with a broken jaw and bloody lips and will ignore pain if they think their life is in danger. Pain = fear = reaction = run that is the way of the horse. This is not a horse problem. I have a great article, by someone else on the TT bit on my articles page of my web site:

<http://www.thinklikeahorse.org/horsearticles.htm> -----

----- ANSWER: Ok, don't take this wrong, but you are very young, so when you say you have been around horses your whole life, that really is not very long. Even if you were around horses when you 2, 5, 9, you are not learning horses, you are just being around them, maybe sitting on them. I tell people what I am about to tell you and they 40, 50 or 60, so I will tell and it is even more so. You don't know much about horses and the fact that you think you have all this experience only gets in the way of you learning more. I can guarantee you this is you causing all this. You have look at this horse like a horse, not your possession, not you property, not your thing to order around and control and make it do what you want. This is hard for younger people. Everything you do with this horse, you look at it as if you were a horse, would like it? Just running around an arena is very boring and most horses hate it. Jumping is very hard on horses, it hurts their feet and legs and they don't like it. Horses hardly ever jump in the wild, they run around things, by jumping they risk falling and hurting a leg and they know that means death in the wild, so horse don't jump, are not made for jumping and it hurts them now and later in life. You say you put leg on the horse when it does not want to go and it kicks, I forgot to ask if you wear spurs or use a whip, this just makes the problem worse. You are not looking at this horse as a partner or friend and working buddy, you are trying to show him who is boss, force him to do things and make him listen, this is probably what you have been taught. I would suggest you work on being a horsewoman, learn the horse, learn how it thinks and lives in the wild, without people, try and connect with your horse as another horse, not as an owner or master. These problems can go away overnight and it is up to you. If you read and learn more about horses, then you will understand how to treat them better so they will give you what you want without you making them or forcing them. As I said earlier, you are young and lots of time to learn, but this horse is being a teacher, a horse is the best teacher of the horse, try and listen more to what he is trying to say and stop trying to make her listen and make her do things, then you will see a big change. If you want your horse to change, you have to change. After all, you said you ride the horse, and the problems started and happen when you handle or ride the horse, so you are causing the reactions and actions of the horse, when you get better, your horse will get better. -----

----- lol, you sound like you are doing a lot and it sounds like maybe too much. Your free choice hay idea is good, but I would just put two or three flakes in the morning and see how long that last, then at night, if it is all gone then put four flakes, when a horse gets enough food they will get picky and will only eat the good stuff and leave stems, so if he is picking and leaving food then too much, if he is almost eating everything, then you are good. As for NEEDING to put on weight, ease up, it takes a long time for a horse to get really thin, then people, mainly women, get this horse feel sorry for them and try and feed the crap out of them and can shock the system, it is worse to go from no food and then excess fat food to quickly. The US found this out when we sent too much milk to a deprived country and all the kids were dying from the mild since it shocked their system to fast. Horses put on weight slowly, let it take it's time, with feed and just about everything else with horses, "THE SLOW WAY IS THE FAST WAY" The horse is under weight from neglect, with just getting fed normal and good hay, he will put his weight back on in time, DON'T TRY AND FIX THIS IN A MONTH, you will cause other problems with this horse. Too much grain and fatty food is not good, so a few "cups" in the morning and few at night (no more than 3 each feeding) will be more than enough for this horse. "Less is more with horses" Make sure he has been wormed, make sure he has a salt block, and get him some exercise, people want to feed horse and then lock them up with no exercise, he needs exercise to build muscle and grow slowly, if you just make him fat with no exercise, he will have bone and other issues when he can't carry his weight. Alfalfa is known to be good for putting on weight, so the mix will be fine, the runny poop is probably from all the grain and weight gain, and other crap, back on that, grass hay is what horse eat and do best on, stick with that and he will be fine. Yes some alfalfa can cause the runs, but that is when it is too rich, normally first or second cutting and if the horse is only being fed alfalfa. I know you mean well, but you got the horse from his neglected home and he is getting good food, let it go slow and in six months of just having food, you will see big change, but exercise is needed too, that will make him want to

eat and will build muscle and well help him heal emotionally. -----
----- Holy Crap, I don't have enough time or space to give you the cons. If you are getting it as a pet to just feed and brush, not a big deal, if you plan on starting it under saddle and riding it, the short list is you can get killed or hurt, you screw up the young horse so bad you can't sell it or give it away, you get hurt and get out of horses all together, you can't ride for at least four years and then for the 3 years it is still in training, you never can relax and enjoy riding with a young horse, it is such a bad idea. Green owners should NOT own green horses...Green on green = black and blue. I tell people this all the time and they don't listen and I have yet to have one person I told this that did not agree with a year later, but then it is too late and you own a spoiled, uncontrollable horse that no one wants and you end up either getting out of horses from frustration or get out from getting hurt and you can longer ride. Read my horsemanship and bad horsemanship page for more examples.

----- First I would say get rid of the chain, no horse needs a stud chain, it hurts, it does not create trust, it does create fear and pain, I agree you do need a refresher, horses do not respond to fear and pain, they get more fearful and learn not to trust the one that hurts them. You said the horse does not have the skills to realize you walk around people and not over them, I say it all the when you blame your horse, you describe yourself. I think you do not the skills to teach him how to not be fearful of you, no skills to teach him to trust you, and no skills to communicate with him unless you use a chain to hurt him. I try and be the voice of the horse. You horse is trying to tell you this and you are not understanding this. If you give him better direction you will not have to call him names like he has no skills. Your horse is only a horse and that is all he knows. Any bad habits he has came from people, any bad habits he keeps comes from you, any new bad habits he gets comes from you and anything he learn good comes from you. Don't blame your horse, look to yourself for the answers. Fix yourself and your horse will get better. All horses can be fixed after people have screwed them up, it will just take horse time. Horse time is as long it takes a horse to get it. Some take longer, some take shorter, but they all get it if it is done right. I am not a bit person, so I would try and to a bosal and get rid of the mech hack. However, not sure you can show in that. She has to learn that the bit will not hurt her or cause pain. So I would get a snaffle and one piece leather head stall (hanger) and let the wear the bit, no reins, no pulling, just let her learn to carry the bit. After a few days of this, then do some attach small light reins, maybe even sting, then let her carry it and just use the sting lightly to show her she can get pressure on the bit without it hurting. After a while of that, you use reins, make sure you can flex her and she knows how to give to pressure from the ground before you try and use the bit in the saddle. -----

----- Question: Hi I have a year old colt which has briefly been handled - he comes up to me in his own time and licks my hand - i can then gently stroke is neck and then move to his shoulder. He then sometimes walks off and then comes back again for some more. My difficulty is that i cannot get a head collar on him - if he sees the head collar he is off and wont even come near me. If i do managed to get it near him and stroke him with it he will then walk off. If i tried to do it up around his neck he just darts off. Any suggestions please. Answer: Horses know what is going to happen before it happens, so you are changing your body and behavior and maybe sneaking or trying to be too easy and too careful, this tells the horse you are up to something and makes them want to flee. Carry a collar with you and DON'T try and catch him, just do your the same thing you do when you don't have the collar, no matter how much you think you can catch him don't, just carry the collar, rub him with it and let him get use to you having it and not being caught, after a few successes then try and feed him in a small pen or stall or small fenced in area so he cannot run away too easy and then try and put the collar on. Every time he runs off from you, he tells you you are lower, he is higher, you can't stop him, he is in charge, he is smarter than you and he should not trust you. All bad lessons, it is better if you walk away first, you leave him, make him want to follow you, make him think you are higher, you leave first and you are smarter. The slow way is the fast way, so just hang out with him, spend lots of time just hanging out, not petting chasing or any pressure things, just handing and being part of his herd, trust will follow and things will get easier. All horses are dangerous if pushed too fast, if handled wrong, if abused, if cornered or if put into a situation where they think their life is in danger. If the only advice you "trainer" can give you is he is dangerous, then that trainer is just as dangerous for calling himself a trainer. First you terminology bugs me, good horsemen or horsewomen do not "break" horses, this implies rough handling, breaking the spirit and forcing a horse with fear, pain and intimidation. Good natural horseman "start" horses, by using natural instincts of a horse to help a horse learn and deal with their fear, using time, patience and understanding. I know it is just a word, but wanted to make sure you knew what I meant when I used the word "start" This horse is telling you something, you have figure out what. You have to be a horse and try and see this from a horse's point of view. Why he is doing this, what is causing this (you?), how can you

help the horse understand what you want, how can you work with him to get him to work with you and deal with his fear. I do not think this horse is doing this just to get out of work, that is what humans would do. A horse accepts his life when he understands he has no other options and he is not in danger. This sounds like a combo of issues but the two that scream out to me is lack of respect and improper starting (foundation, training from this trainer) and previous mishandling. The fact that you got on this horse and rode him does not impress me and I think you are gambling with luck. Each time he runs off, stops you from mounting, pushes you away or gets away from you, he thinks he is smarter, he is higher and you are weak, not a good leader and he should not trust you. This is key to getting a horse to respond to your request. You have to change what you are doing so the horse will change what it is doing. If you keep doing the same thing, the horse will keep doing the same thing. This horse does not trust you or respect you, that is the bottom line, fix that and most all other problems will go away. You are taking the easy way if you continue to allow this and then ride him and think he is safe, trust you or respects you, then you are making a bad decision and setting yourself and this horse up for failure. Deal with this respect and trust issue on the ground and go back to riding, if you take the time it takes, it will take less time. The slow way is the fast way with horses. Read my horsemanship page on my web site, really understand herd behavior and sacking out, if you do this you will grow and help this horse, if you decide to rush it and not put in the time, then you cheat yourself and the horse. good luck, -----

----- Most of my advice deals with what we do as riders that cause the problems. Since you are the only one handling this horse, you have taught him to do what he does. Soft hands make soft horses, a horse will not pull against nothing??? So first work on your hands, really learn and practice holding and NOT pulling and giving back as soon as the horse gives. Do some riding with a rope halter and ONE rein riding, this teaches you to use one rein independently, to control the softly since you cannot cheat and use two reins, then after a few rides with just one rein, you will learn how to pay attention and really concentrate on one hand, one rein, one cue, and one answer. This also teaches you how to communicate with your horse since you have to be easy, since you only have one rein. -----

----- The problem is in the paddock and in the stall. We moved him to a new barn a few months ago, and he became uncontrollably psychotic. When he wasn't bucking&bolting, he was very nervous about being away from other horses. The barn is set up so that he only consistently sees 2 other horses and occasionally sees 7 others, but has no interaction with them. He has gotten better about the paddock, but the owner of the barn tells me that he is still pacing back and forth, even when there is hay in the paddock. She cut the paddock in half to try to get him to stop, but he needs the bigger paddock because of arthritic stifles. I haven't seen him pace much as of late. When i or my mom is there, he is quiet. He is still bad in the barn for me when all the other horses are outside. He is also bad if the two other horses are being worked at the same time and he can't see them. I'm at my whit's end and i have no idea what to do. The barn owner told us that me that we should start looking at a new place for him as he is "very unhappy there." This is true but we are unable to move to another barn at this time. Please help! -----

----- ANSWER: The worst thing you can do is make his paddock smaller, he needs horses to feel safe, you are abusing this horse by keeping him locked up in a small area. If you cannot provide better care then you should not have him. Find him a pasture with other horses even if means you can't see him as often or as much, you are killing this horse mentally and his behavior will only get worse and then he will end up hurting you when you ride him and then he will get blamed for being a bad horse. -----

----- Horses are made to be locked up alone, it is the worst thing for a horse. I discuss this on my Bad Horsemanship page of my website. Don't be selfish and keep this horse so you have a horse, you will end up getting hurt by this poor horse that is going crazy since he is being caged and jailed. -----

----- Answer: Well you are very detailed in your information and I wonder if you are the same way with your horse. Too much information may over load this horse. Try and do less, with horses less is more. Try and ride this horse nice and slow NOT in arena or jumps, just have a nice calm ride with him, get to know him as a horse and let him get to know you without all the yields, leg pressure, bit controls, commands, lead, hip in and out, hindquarter control, transitions, jumps, trots, canters, diagonals, etc.... Just be his friend and see what he tells you when you just hang out with him. It sounds like he is trying to tell lots, but maybe you are not able to him since you are so focused on all the specifics and riding rules. -----

----- Question: I am a forty year old female with a 12 year old gelding. He was given as a gift. He is fine with my husband as the herd leader but not so with me. When feeding in the field he has run around me, blocked me and turned his but to me. I am fearful of what he might do next. I tried to lunge him - worked for that day only. I thought the bag idea

was a really good for the young ones but don't want to cause spookiness in this older one. Help!!! Answer: Don't worry about spooky, teach this horse not to mess with you, he is testing you and if you do not respond with making him move he will see you as weak, a lower horse and his behavior will get worse. Any act of disrespect from him to you should be dealt with hard and seriously, so he will respect and will know the right answer is not to mess with people, I don't think you will make him spooky and even if you do, at least you will be safe. ---
----- Answer: I agree, Ray would not agree with that. You said you want the horse back that you had, which implies he was good when you got him and now he is not, which means you make him the way he is. If he was already this way when you got him, then whatever you have done has not worked and you have failed to help him, so either way you need to change what you are doing if you want your horse to change. Most catching problems are from bad catches, people problems. I catch my horses some time to just them a carrot, some time just to walk them to fresh grass to let them eat, some time to bring them in for grain, some time to just groom them, and some time to ride them.... so they never know what will happen when I catch them, but they do know that it will not always be bad or work.... So I have kept the curiosity alive the horse. Too many people only catch a horse to lock them in a stall, to saddle them up, to take them to a round pen, to pull them away from their herd, to work them, to show them who is boss, etc... I am surprised on how many horses allow them self to be caught... Change what you are doing and your horse will change, hang out with your horse without trying to catch him, spend time with your horse being a good pasture mate, make it worth something to the horse so he will want to be with you rather than worry when he see you... The horse is never wrong and it is never the horse's fault. ----- Answer: lol, not sure what I said, but you are right, I do not listen to people as well as horses. However, each of your emails tend to be about YOU telling me what I should be listening too, what I should be seeing and what I should be telling you. This is email, and since 75% or more of communication is NON-Verbal, you are only getting maybe 25% of my message. So words and ideas tend to get lost or blurred. So perhaps, you could maybe take what you can from my answer, even thou it is not perfect, like you and your horse, and maybe accept what little help you get and be happy with small victories, then maybe you would grow to listen to your horse and hear more than what you want, what you think or what other tell you. My answers are the best I can from a short email on complex subject hearing only YOUR side!!! I do not get to talk or see the horse's view, I do not get to see you and get your non verbals and you do not get to see mine. So another observation I get from your email is, you want more, you want perfection, you want it your way and cannot accept small help, small tries and small victories. If I helped your horse just a little bit, I really don't care if I helped you, make you feel valued, made you feel special, or whatever else you are looking for. I DO THIS TO HELP HORSES! So, if you FEEL better telling me how I don't listen, how I did not help, how I did not whatever..... Sleep on this, YOU asked me, I do this for free, I don't ask for anything in return and 75% of the people I try and help, blame me or their horse so I have become very uncaring about what people say, since I know, I do this for the horse not for people. It is never the horse's fault, the horse is never wrong, and people cause most all problems with horses! A good horseman can hear a horse talk, a great horseman can hear a horse whisper and a bad horseman will not hear a horse even if it screams. -----
----- Answer: Well, a lot of errors on your part. Most are common rookie mistakes, but like I always say, a horse has to pay for our mistakes and have no choice in the matter. The hot wire is dumb, hot should not be on gate or where horses walk through a lot, every time a horse get hit with hot wire and you are holding or leading or with the horse, the horse thinks you did it, does not know why and it destroys trust and makes a horse not want to be with you.... I agree with the horse, if I got shocked for no reason when you were around, I would not want to be around you. Horse know how to run and protect them self if we humans stay out of it. So you need to pay more attention and be more aware. You suckered your horse into an area with another horse and then cornered him (held on to lead rope) and prevented him from running or protecting himself. A whip may help for a while, but you need to make sure EVERY horse knows you are high horse and don't mess with you don't approach you and don't come near you unless you invite them in. And the time to teach this is not when your poor horse is stuck in the middle or forced to be there. As for when you said the herd or horses make you chase, that is absolutely bullcrap a horse does not make you chase them you choose to chase them and you do it, Since you do not know what else to do, since you decide to chase, since you failed to learn how to be part of a herd and how to enter a herd as leader, you force the horses to run. This is another rookie move and only inexperienced horse people do this, since they fail to grow and learn better more effective ways of dealing and communicating with horses. Work on your self and your horse horse will get better. Listen to others who do not know and you will continue to repeat their mistakes. Learn for yourself,

read, study the horse, spend time hanging out and being with horses, listen to horses and stop always trying to teach them and show them, learn from them, they are the best teacher of the horse. Knowledge of the horse is the best gift you can give to a horse. -----

----- Question: Now, per your advice, I'm regularly ponying both problem mares and they love it! The first time I ponied the bucking mare, she pulled her lead out of my hands. She galloped all over with the lead slamming her rear until she figured out to gallop back to my old gelding and me and beg forgiveness. She never tried it again. Now she makes those happy blowing sounds as we ride and keeps the lead loose even though I insist on keeping her nose within 3 feet of my knee. As for the Paso Fino mare, today I took her on her first serious bush whacking expedition, to a peak of Monte Largo. I'd call it just a steep hill with sliding rocks and cactus and junipers, but back East people might call it a mountain. She was worried at first when we turned to go down as she had to just about sit on her rump it was so steep, but after just two or three minutes she gathered up her courage. I'm also trying out longing the bucking mare the donkey training way, walking with her in small circles as she circles just eight feet away from me, and then doing the pivot on hind feet, then pivot on front feet the way you do it with donkeys. Interestingly enough, she has been making those happy blowing sounds when we do these exercises, which she never did before with Parelli-style "games". Answer: Thanks for kind words. Being right is not my goal, helping horses get a better deal is why I do this. I really did nothing, I tell people all the time, it is never the horse's fault. So if it is always our fault then when a horse does good, it is because we did good, we listened, we set the horse up for success, we gave good directions and helped the horse find the right answer. You changed what you were doing so the horse changed. Glad to hear you are enjoying your horses more and it seems your horses are enjoying you more. Don't forget the lesson, horses are just a reflection of us and what we do. Happy trails, -----

ANSWER: First I would stop caring or worrying about what she does in pasture, who cares if she plays runs, gets exercise, spooks, you said she was under weight and now getting good hay, beet pulp and other good food, now she has energy she never had before since she was starving, now she is learning how to use her feet, body, turn and play and be a horse. This barn manager that wants to pull her out of field is an idiot, if a horse in a field is bothering someone getting a lesson, then the instructor and person getting the lesson needs to worry about what they are doing and now what a horse in pasture is doing. That is just a bunch of crazy horse women who want to try and control the world instead of controlling their horse. I also think you are reacting too much to this horse and it is causing confusion. Ignore anything the horse does and stay focused on what you want, no matter what she does, do not react, do not try and stop it, do not try and correct it, just stay focused on what you want. This horse is could have eye sight issues and if she is losing her sight, that is very scary for a horse. It could be that she knows everyone around her gives her attention and stops trying to make her work when she spooks, so she could be training you and others that she is crazy so she does not have to work. When I say give direction, I mean stop reacting to her, just keep showing what you want, stay focused on the task, don't let her distract you or get you to stop or change what you are doing. By not reacting to her, you show her you are smart, you are strong and a good leader.

1: All horses drop gran, in the wild they do not get grain, they chew, grass, long and they even drop grass some time, so dropping grain is not that rare, in fact,very normal. Feed him in a bucket, if it drop he can still pick up and eat again. Horses kept in pasture and graze have better teeth then horses stalled and fed grain and hay. A horse does not need to be put down to float teeth, many years ago, it was very rare for a horse to get meds to get teeth floated, if the horse is sacked out and handled enough, not need for meds. 2: This horse is old and may have immunities or may be old and have a lower defense, personal choice, if it aint hurting him, I would get them but spread them out every two or three months and don't shock and over power the system with all of them at once. 3: Coughing is a Vet questions, your horse is old, in the wild not to many horses make it past 10 or 12, not worming, no vit, no grain, no feet care, no fresh water in winter, colic, no teeth work, no shots, so we have made it to where we keep horses alive longer, but they legs, muscles, joints, body starts deteriorating, so riding a horse in later years is very very hard on a horse. You like it and feel safe, but it can be really hard on an older horse. If this horse has given you many years of good rides, lesson and love, you may want to get another horse (not a young 3 year old) so you and this horse can still go out, maybe pony and let the horse get exercise walking with you and not being ridden. I see and hear people riding horses 28 and 30, I just think this is not good for a horse. -----

Answer: Its sounds like you rode her too much and too hard too fast. You said she had not been ridden and then you said I rode her alot. It would be like you sitting on the couch all winter and then I drag you out and make you 20 miles, you would sore, hurting, not happy and may sit down yourself. What you did is a good way to get a horse sour to riding, sour to being with you, sour to getting

saddled, makes them sore so when you ride them the next day she will buck from pain and soreness. Treat a horse the way you would want to be treated. The slow way is the fast way with horses. I would give her a week or so off and then SLOWLY get her back in shape, take short easy rides. It may have only been a test, but since you did what you did there is no way of knowing. It could also be a back injury, it would a pulled muscle or tendon that was aggravated from a lot of riding. Approach things from a horse's point of view. It is not fun him either. You are looking at this as a horse problem. I see this as a YOU problem. I see this as you are not giving clear cues, the horse is confuse, the horse is not ready, you have not taught the horse what you want, you have prepared the horse so he knows what you want, you are going too fast, you are asking what the horse cannot give yet, you are pushing too hard or not pushing hard enough..... as you see, I think most all horse problems are people problems. I think this since if a trainer, or experience horseman or someone can get on a horse and make the horse better and do things that another can't, then it always tells me that the horse can do anything if it is asked right, taught right and showed right. A horse knows how to be a horse, too many people try to fix a horse, try to make a horse better, try to teach a horse..... if people listened to a horse and learned from a horse, then there would be less horse problems. No matter what you are doing, it is either not working, the horse is confused, or the horse does not know what you want or what the right answer is. It always comes back to you or me or anyone. Until you see this as a you problem, YOU can't fix it. Try going back to basic, get your horse to stop and go when you tell him, forget where he goes.... once you get him good at stopping and moving when you tell him, then work on moving and changing directions, left and right, stop and starts, then when he gets good at that, then have him go to one point and stop. Then go to another point and stop. If you take a few weeks and some time, you will get better with your cues and he will get better understanding what you want. It is a partnership, not a horse that you have to constantly correct...???

----- Answer: Well from your question you sound like you think a bit stops a horse and you say the horse runs or walks thru it. This tells me you are pulling on the bit to try and stop the horse, this will not work and will only teach the horse pull, which is what your horse is doing. Never ever pull on two reins when stopping a horse, only one rein, your goal is to get the horse to circle and bend his head one way, that will slow him, make him uncomfortable and he will want to stop, you are trying to use the bit, pain from the bit to make him stop, that will not work. Read my horsemanship page so you can understand how horses think. As for bits, I don't use any bit and believe that if you cannot stop a horse in a halter, then you should not be riding them. A snaffle bit is a NON leverage bit, when you pull one pound the horse feels one pound this is better for the horse, helps you develop feel. A curb bit is a Leverage bit, it give 3 to 5 pounds of pressure for every one pound you pull, it is more painful, it can hurt more with less pull. A curb bit is for a horse that is neck reined and is softer. A snaffle is a training bit that is more forgiving of hard or inexperienced hands. You are blaming the horse and the bit for the horse not stopping or running through a bit..... I say YOU are the reason this is happening. I assure you I could ride this horse in a halter and this horse would stop within 10 to 20 mins. I would say ride this horse in a halter in a round pen or small enclosed area so he cannot run off, teach him to stop with body cues and not from pain of a bit, then you will not need a bit to stop him and your confidence will grow and so will the horse.

----- Question: I have been working with my stud and his ground manners are very good. But when it comes to the saddle pad and the saddle he freaks out. What can I do to make this an easier experience for the both of us. Answer: When you say he freaks out that tells me you have not prepared him properly. You need to work on sacking out, that will build trust and teach you to read him and teach him that you can put pressure and remove pressure. Read my horsemanship page and it will help you understand why your horse does it does.

----- QUESTION: We have a herd of 3 mares and 3 geldings. The last horse on the place is my 14 yr. old Buckskin gelding. At first he seemed fine at the bottom of the pecking order but once the alpha mare went onto heat, he started acting differently. Out of the blue he attacked my 20 yr. old paint gelding. He kept biting him and ran him through an electric fence. My paint ended up in the middle of a 2 lane highway and thank God he wasn't hit. Now I have to keep my paint in a box stall or the outdoor arena or the Buckskin attacks him. The alpha mare isn't doing much to protect the paint but she kind of tries to "boss" the Buckskin around. Can I ever put the two geldings out together again? I am concerned for the paint because he is 20 and I don't want him bullied or badly hurt. What should I do?

ANSWER: I say stop trying to protect horses from horse, this is the natural order, the older gelding is getting slower and weaker, so instincts tell the other horses they have to move. The 20 yr old tries to hang on and has to make sure the 14 yr old is ready. Once the 20 yr old accepts this they will stop fighting, you are trying to prevent something and all you are doing is making it worse and prolonging it. You do not have to keep the horse in a box stall you think

you have to. This is nothing but horses being horses, if the fence was not there, like in the wild, the horse would have worked this out and all would be fine, since the fence was there and since you locked the horse up, you think you helped and I think you made it worse. Put the two in a round pen with no corners and no fence and they will run, kick, bite and rear and will work it out and the winner will be higher and the loser will be lower. -----

----- Answer: When something is not working stop and look at what you are doing. If the horse is playing with the halter, then it is not scared of it, so that tells me that you are trying too hard and not the right way. You have to get the horse used to you rubbing and being around his face before you move to trying to put something on his face. So lots of rubs, scratches, give carrots with one hand while the other hand is rubbing ears and eyes, very short rubs and touches with lots of RELEASE. You have to stop doing something before the horse moves or makes you stop, then slowly do it longer and longer so the horse learns to expect it, after you do this a while then add just a rope, do not catch or try and hold, just rub the rope around the head, ears and eyes, mouth etc... then after lots of that then maybe put the rope around his nose and around his head, then take off (release) after the horse tells you he is good with those little steps, then rub the halter around and let him get used to that, don't try and put it on, just let him learn that it will not hurt him, then when the horse tells you he is ready, you can put it on...once you get it one don't try and drag him around and pull him or go too fast.. this horse needs lots of time to learn and figure out he is safe with you and with things you put on him. -----

----- Answer: Like most horse problems, people normally cause them. When you get better your horse gets better. The horse is seven and you got him at two, that means he has had almost 5 years to figure you out. Horses know what is going to happen before it happens. This horse knows you and feels safe with you but does not see you a strong leader or he would not do the things he is doing. You need to look at this as your problem, don't try and fix the horse, improve yourself, learn and work on what you are doing wrong, fix that and the horse issues will go away. This may sound strange, but I assure it, I have seen a thousand times. The sooner people fix them self, their horse gets better. You need to work on your communication, your leadership role, your higher position, work on understand and listening to this horse, understand why he is doing what he doing and how you are contributing to what he is doing, once you find that then you can change what you are doing and your horse will change. If you do the same thing, you horse will do the same thing. People always want their horse to change but they are not will to accept their part and change to make it better and easier for the horse. Read my horsemanship and it will help you see horses different. I put my site together so people that wanted to read and take the time to learn and improve their knowledge, they could do it for free. So read my entire site and you will learn things you never knew about horses and you will them different, then you will change how you deal with them and you will see as your grow your horse gets better. -----

----- Answer: I am a big anti Tom Thumb bit, here is a link to a good article on that bit the explains how bad it is.
http://www.markrashid.com/trouble_with_tom_thumb.htm The bit is not the issue, you, your hands and ability is the issue. Since you have been riding in a TT, you have been relying on the pain and pressure of the bit so you have not been concentrating on your hands, you softness, your horse's responses, so you have trained yourself to be hard hands, unconsciously, and you have trained your horse to ignore you, not pay attention to you and to only listen if you are rough, cause pain and hurt him. Bad lessons all around. So a snaffle or hackamore is a direct rein device, so you will have less strength, less pain and less control AT FIRST. But this will force you to work with your horse, pay attention to your horse and have better communication with your horse. People that use TT tend to be poor horsepeople since they have relied on this pain device, so they normally lack confidence and the ability to control and ride a horse without the cheat of a pain device. So you will have to commit to learn and change your old ways of riding and learn and grow and work with your horse as a partner and not as you being a ruler. The fact is you should not be riding any horse with any bit unless you can ride them in a halter. Read my site, on my horsemanship page on riding with one rein and learning to ride with just a halter, this will make you better able to change and feel like you have control, so start in a round pen or small enclosed area so you can learn to talk to your horse without pain. Soft hands make soft horses; hard hands make hard horses absolutely think this is an handling issue and human issue. If this person does not like QH and your horse is a QH, I would say that is your answer. Anyone that claims to be a trainer or expert and then groups horses into breeds is an idiot in my book. A horse is a horse, period. Some breeds have different pros and cons, but they are all horses, they are all prey animals and they are all fear based and have strong survival instincts. I can make a horse head shy in about two minutes, if I hit the horse in the face, hit with a rope in the face, punch it or do anything painful to the face, the horse will learn fast and will move his head anytime something

moves to his face. You can test this. Give your horse a treat, if it takes it without shying then give this "expert trainer" a treat and ask him to give it to your horse, the horse will tell you if he is the one making him head shy. Food is a blamed for many of horse problems, it can have some influence but rarely enough to create dramatic changes. Rolled oats are fine for a horse and they have been eating them for years, I feed my horse oats. It may give more energy, it may make them feel stronger, it may increase their alertness, but so will just about anything you feed a horse. We feed good grown, good fertilized and high quality hay, then we grain them with high energy grain, then we give vitamin supplements, maybe some corn oil, beet pulp, rice bran, corn sweet feed, sugar treats, alfalfa hay and then lock a horse up in a stall and wonder why they get excited when we handle them. Like most horse problems they are really people problems. Moderation is the key, not too much of any one thing. More exercise and turn out time, more ride time, more handling time will make better horses. You can make a horse listen no matter what he eats if the horse sees you as his leader and you understand horses. So anyone that starts trying to address horse issues with food, stalls, equipment, surroundings, just don't get it. I am in California so not too to Ohio, sorry. This can be fixed easy with proper handling and keeping Yahoo's away from your horse. Don't try and address this head shy problem and try and fix it. Just be normal and lots of rubs to head and face so the horse will learn to enjoy it and will not associate it with slaps, yanks or hits. This is based on the facts you provided. If you see a head shy problem as a head shy problem and it really is a disrespect issue and the horse is just showing you that you are not the boss and that she is not going to let you touch her head, then this is a different issue. -----

----- All horses are a dream until you ask them to do something or put pressure on them. Forget what happen as a colt, it is not important. Keeping him in a paddock and locked up is the biggest problem. A horse needs other horses to feel safe, to learn, to play, to get scared, to be able to run and play, especially Geldings. As for him running off when you get on, you should not be getting on until you are sure he wont run off. Small steps, a little at a time, hobble train him and teach him to tie well with a ROPE HALTER. Do your first mounts when tied and then when hobbled in an enclosed area, so if he runs off he can only go in a circle. You should not get on until you are sure he will not run off. So just put a foot in and get off, put weight on stirrup and get off, stand in stirrup and get off, lean over saddle and get off, put a leg over and get off immediately. You have to show him that he is not trapped when you get on teach him that you get off every time you get on, so he learns the right response is to stand still. Yes, absolutely put him with the other horses all the time. They will teach him more in a day than you can in a year. He needs to learn manners, respect, move from pressure, pecking order and many other things. He is going crazy from being alone. He will get meaner and more uncontrollable the more you keep him alone. Let them do the hard lesson so you will not have to. He will still bite you and disrespect you if you do not show him you are higher, but the other horses will make it clear how he treats higher horses, which will be you when you two are together. First a light tom thumb is like saying I saw a light elephant. The TT bit is one of the worst pain producing bits out there. Many people think it is a snaffle and it is not. It is a leverage bit with a break in the mouth piece, but most people think since it has a break that it is a snaffle. If I could get rid of the worst bits the TT would be one of them. A twisted wire snaffle is a snaffle but one of the worst snaffles for pain. It causes it pain. I don't blame this horse for running, he wants the rider off and wants the pain to stop. So it makes perfect sense what he is doing. I always tell people that if you can't ride your horse in a halter, then you should not be riding it in a bit. A halter ensures you know how to control the horse without pain, it makes you learn to communicate with the horse verses make him do things with pain. I don't use bits, don't promote them and whenever I work with a horse the first thing that goes is the bit and then I get to the other issues, which normally immediately become less as the bit goes away. Now I know that any bit can be soft or hard, depending on who is hold the reins, so the other rider you talk of may be scared or nervous of the horse, so her fear causes her to hang on and pull the bit harder thinking that is how she can control him, this is a mistake of many riders, new and old. A bit does not control a horse, never did and never will, a horse will run with a broken jaw and bloody lips and will ignore pain if they think their life is in danger. Pain = fear = reaction = run that is the way of the horse. ----- I am 46 years old, and have very little horse experience. I haven't done anything to fix problem, but try to scold the older horse. Both horses are male and in a pasture with a barn. I have a 20 ish year old Tennessee Walker, have had him 4 or so months. I put in a 2 year old quarter horse. The Tn Walker bites and runs the quarter horse, especially while I am there feeding them, (in different troughs). The quarter ran through a barbed wire fence that was near a pond and cut up his face area. His eyes are ok, no major cuts or damage. Should I not worry or think of separating them? ANSWER: How long have they been together? How big is the area? Feed in the middle of the pasture with different piles, at least three and at least 20 feet apart. This is

normal herd behavior, the older one is teaching the young one manners. Don't separate them, in a few days or a week they will be buddies. Read my horsemanship page, it will help you understand what is going on. You need to educate your self about horses more so you will understand what and why they do what they do. This totally normal. Rick ----- FOLLOW-UP ----- QUESTION: They have only been together for 4 or 5 days. They are in a several acre pasture. Why 3 piles and not just 2 piles? Answer: lol, see there you go wanting a quick answer and a fast fix, I explain this in detail on my site. If you understood horses you would know this. Food is competition, the lead horse gets to eat first, gets to eat the best food, gets to drink first, this is how horses live, if you understood this you would know how to prevent problems and then would not have to ask others how to fix problems. Prevention is better than treatment, direction is better than correction, knowing is better than asking. Well for 16 you show more character than a lot of adults. You need to be honest and let the buyer know what you think, if they make a choice to buy the horse then they accept that this, like any horse, may or not be perfect and will make mistakes. Tell people what her good points are, what her problems are and let them make the decision. You are not forcing anyone to buy the horse, so as long as you are honest, don't worry about what the horse does after you sell it. Now for the making money part, this gets my goat, a horse that is a loyal friend and companion, as given you years of enjoyment, pleasure and many good rides, for you to worry about money is offense to me. If I got rid of my horse, I would much rather give him away to a good home where I know he would not be abused or neglect then sell him for \$10,000 to someone that did not care about him. Selling a horse should not be about money, it should be about finding a home for an animal that you own and have accepted responsibility for many years ago, just because you sell a horse does not mean you are released of the responsibility for the good safe care of the horse. It would be like if the slaughter house gave me the best price for my horse I should sell it to them.... that is not being a good horseperson. Find your horse a good home and even if you take a loss, you owe it to your friend who have given you much over the years. That is my take, -----

First, your dream means nothing to the horse. Your horse wants understanding. You need to understand horses better. Just from what you told me your story has been told a 1000 times. Your horse should not be showing any teeth, this is a severe show of lack of respect, you need to do ground work, round penning and teach this horse that you are the leader, head horse and she must not treat you like a lower horse. You have not defined the pecking order she has. Not good. Don't ride her anymore, you are teaching her to throw you, every time she does it she finds and thinks that is the right answer and that is how she gets release. Read my web site, every page, you start to see horses different and it will help get you in a better starting point. All young horses bite or nip, they are just testing to see if it ok, don't lecture him, just bop, swap, smack on the mouth the second he does it, you can let him nuzzle, and rub and explore with his nose, but the second he puts teeth, whack him and move on forget it, don't carry on and make a big deal about it, the correction should never be longer than the act. As for the other horses, I would put him in with them immediately, if may make it harder for you to catch or get close, but it will be better for him. He will feel safer and will have a herd to protect him, then the more time you spend with your other two, he will see this and will want to hang out with you since you hang out with his herd. Keeping him apart is only raising his insecurity and is confusing him. A lone horse is the worst thing for a horse..... I know, I know, but Rick they can sniff each other and visit over the fence, it is not the same, it is bad any way you look at it.... get him with his own kind and his herd ASAP. You will a big change in his confidence, his sleep, his stress, all good.... yes they may bite him or chase at first, let it happen and stay out of it, make sure you feed like a recommend on my site. Sounds like you are wearing her out. She is telling you she is scared, she may have had a bad experience with ditches or may never have seen one or crossed one before. For only 3 trail rides and already at 14 miles, you appear to be going way too fast. Give this horse a chance to learn, teach her, don't scare her or fear her over, start with small ditches, get off and walk her over them so she can see you cross first, try and understand her fear and not just put more pressure on her when she is scared. If you keep this up she will soon stop trusting you and only see you as someone that scares her or does not understand her, either way you will not have a partnership, you will be a forceful master and she will be nothing more than a slave. -----

----- Q: Hi Rick. My sister is 12 going on her 5th year of riding. She recently recieved a arab/welsh 10 y.o. pony. he is a very willing partner but he is green. He doesnt stop very easily when she asks nicely (half halts, stops with seat). My mother says that the only way that these two will learn together is by getting on and just riding. I am afraid that she will be to harsh on his mouth, (I recently looked in his mouth and found minimal gum brusing. So i asume that he has a realitively strong mouth.) Do you think that my mother is taking the right route with the new partnership? (learning by doing?) or should she be under consistant professional training? Thank you for your time! A: I

can't help but laugh when I read this. You obviously are concerned about your sister. However, no matter what I say will change anything. You may be right, your concerns maybe valid, but your sister and your mother appear to have the decision authority here. So even if I advise you, what can you do with it? Your sister is young and does not know much at 12, your mom is right and wrong, you mean well and the horse is stuck where it is. You say that the horse has gum bruising and you assume he has a strong mouth.... I say the bit is causing the bruising and your sister is too rough, does not know how to be soft and should not be riding with a bit. If you remove your sister and the bit, I assure you the horse would not have gum bruising..... so how can anyone come to the conclusion that the horse has a strong mouth and that is what causes the bruising? All horses are strong, but they can only get gum bruising from someone pulling the reins and bit. So your conclusion tells me you don't really understand horses very well, not to say you are not trying and you have valid concerns, but back to the horse, he is stuck where he is. I guess the short answer is, your mom is right and wrong and you are right and wrong and the horse is just a horse. I would put your sister in a round pen with a rope halter and lead rope and make her ride the horse with only a halter and lead rope (NO bit). This will force her to learn to communicate with the horse without the leverage, pain and bit. By teaching her this, you will help her and the horse and your mom will be right. The more she rides the better she will get and the horse will "teach her". This cannot happen with pain, gum bruising and bits, it will only happen with time spent with the horse without pain. In a round pen the horse can't run off and if it does it can't go too fast or too far and your sister will learn how to stop, slow and control a horse without a pain bit and will gain confidence in her riding, seat and controlling a horse with communication not pain from a bit. This is a win win for everyone, you make your sister safer, your mom gets your sister on the horse riding, and the horse gets rid of a pain bit... I have a video on riding with one rein and halter on youtube and on my site.

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

Rick

Kicking:

Well one thing you can do is tie a ribbon to her tail, I think a red ribbon means a kicking horse, that way it will warn other riders that your horse kicks, don't get too close and for those who don't know it, they will ask what is the red ribbon for and then you tell them. This is not that uncommon of a problem. Spurs will not help and will make it worse, that is just ignorance. If I was teaching you math and gave you question that you had no idea of the answer and I kick you every time you got it wrong, that is what you are doing to a horse with spurs, it does not work, don't let anyone spur your horse. Once you get to be a better rider you will sense the kicks before they happen and will be able to pull her in or disengage her rear end, she cannot kick if you butt if moving away and her head if moving to the gelding. For her perspective, she is only of two mares and is tired of every male sticking their nose up her butt, so she is just defending her honor. Keeping her in a stall is contributing to the problem, put her in pasture with all the geldings, she will get tired of kicking and will learn to deal with them in a herd and not only when you put a saddle on her and make her deal with it. This will make a big difference. Well that would depend on what you did to get her to start this. It is very easy to tell when a horse starts a new behavior when the same owner has had the horse, then it is easy to see that the owner or handler caused it. A horse should not be kicking and obviously your hand smack is not working, so the horse will not stop. The horse is doing this because something caused it to start doing it, whatever that was needs to be known before you can figure out how to fix this, otherwise any fix will only be defeated since the same thing will be done again to cause this, unless you figure out what is causing this. -----

ANSWER: If a horse is a herd never hit (kicked) another horse and if this horse just left when ever another horse kicked at him, that horse would be the lowest horse in the herd. That horse is you. Praise means nothing, leaving means you are weak, not a strong leader and you tell the horse you are higher, and you can move me or make me leave so you are in charge and I will listen to you. Very bad lesson for a horse. You should treating him like he is treating you. You should moving him and making him run or move away. Since you can't bite him or kick him, you have to hit him, either with a rope or your hand. By not smacking him in mouth when he bites you, he is telling you he is higher and you are lower and by you not doing anything you are telling him that you are lower and he is higher. Your other horse will do the same thing in time if you never disciple her. A horse needs a leader and you are not being one. You can

get rid of him, but if you care about him then you need to learn how to disciple him and knock the crap out of him if he bites you. A bite is a sign of lack of respect, then comes kicks, then comes rearing and striking out and then comes you get hurt and the horse gets put to sleep for being dangerous. The horse pays for you kindness. It is not fair to the horse. And this is normal horse behavior, all horses do it and it is the way they are. -----

As always my opinion is based only on what you tell. The trainer that worked with him should be better qualified to give an opinion since she has first hand knowledge. Without seeing the horse, since I would see things different than you, maybe, from your description, I have to say you are pushing too hard and expecting too much. You said the horse make a lot of improvement, that tells me you were doing the right things, now you say he is regressing and going back, that tells me you are not doing the things. The horse is the sole judge of what works and what does not work. I think horse only get sour when people push too hard, too often and too much. It sounds like the horse knows that the ring is work, no fun, does not want to be there and is getting tired of being just pushed in the ring. The horse was not this way before, according to you, so you had to do something to make him this way. You need to figure out what you did to create the problem and then figure out what to do to fix the problem. Your choices seem OK, but I can't see the horse and tell what works and what does not, only you can do that. I would not give up, I would not keep doing what you are doing and I would not be more assertive if the horse is scared. You can take it easy, not work so hard, just spend time with the horse as a herd member/leader and just get to know the horse without asking something from him. You can slow down and do things he is good at and go slower on what you want him to do. Listen to your horse, he will tell you if you listen. Horses are not brats, mean or stubborn. Those are human terms that people want to put on horses. Your questions is unclear, you say you have had her for 5 years, did she do this before, when did it start, did you ever ride her in these areas before, you said she did not used to be this bad, does that mean she has always had the problem and got worse. A horse is a reflection of the person handling it. Most people that blame the horse never look at what they are doing to cause the problems. She may not want to go up hills since she feels your fear or she has not done with you. You can try to do ground work in all the areas that appear to be a problem with her, do things she is good at and knows well, build her confidence on the ground in the those areas before you try to ride her. The fact that you told me, you had to get off, tells me that this horse has your number and knows how to work you until you get off. As for the ear infection, you would know better than me it that made it worse or changed things. I always look at the person for the problem first, since that is normally the right answer. Maybe one half percent of all horse problems are from something other than the person.

QUESTION: 47 No horse experience I tied him up this morning, but when tried to untie him he tried to kick, i refused to untie him until he stopped, he stopped and then when i untied him like to ran me over to get to the feed kicking. He is alone right now, he is pasture kept. I want to stop this behavior and I was told he was just hungry and when he gets enough food he will stop this behavior, i really don't believe that. I also have a gelding in the next pasture that charges the fence, ears pinned back and very aggressive to the yearling. I want them to get along, what do I do to stop this behavior without anyone getting hurt. The gelding is 19 years old and was pastured alone for several years. last year i bought two miniature jennys and they are pastured with him. I would like them all to be able to roam both pastures together.

ANSWER: When a lower horse kicks a higher horse, the higher horses attacks him and makes him run off. Since your horse is running you over and kicking at you, he thinks you are lower in the pecking order. I agree with the horse. You have told him that you are lower since you allowed him to treat you that way without disciplining him. You have little horse experience and your horse knows it. Not good for you. You better learn fast, since when horses teach lessons to humans they are very costly. Read my horsemanship page twice! Some things will not make sense until you read the entire page. -----

As for someone telling you the horse is just hungry!..... you have to be crazy to believe that or have no clue of how horses think or live. I could not feed my horses for a week and they would not kick me, your horse kicks since it can, since you allow it, since you do not stop it, since you do not make the horse wish he never kicked you..... that is why your horse kicks, if someone thinks it is for food, then it will be for carrots, then will be to be with friends, then it will be not to get ridden, then it will be because you did not pet it right, then it will forget the message... a horse needs to know it kicks for no reason or it knows it kicks for any reason, if you let it. You are in danger. This horse will hurt you if you do not get smart fast. He will not hurt you because he is mean, or dangerous, or aggressive, or

untrainable, or because of his past, or because he is hungry..... he will do since he can and you have not taught him that he should not and can not! As for the horses charging each other, this is being done since they are kept alone, they have been taught, by keeping them isolated that is where they are safe and do not want anything new. Too bad, put the horses together and let them work it out.....DONT SAVE THEM, DON'T TRY AND STOP THEM, STAY OUT OF IT... I talk about this on my site about putting lots of food out in many different piles so they will not pay attention to the new member of herd. -----

Question: I have this horse it is a gelding its 15 hands tall and probably about 1300 pounds its big,i want my dad to ride but were afraid he is to big he is 6'4" tall and 325 pounds my question is would he break the horse down or hurt it if he kept it in a walk? or should he not ride it?

Answer: Yes I agree, he is too big, a horse should only carry about 20% of its weight, if in shape, that does not mean add a few hundred pounds to get a higher 20%. Most horses today are over weight, 15 hands at 1300 pounds like the horse is over weight. Once you add saddle and other stuff most horses carry 20 to 50 pounds more than what a person weighs. You did not say how old, a horse's back is not fully grown or developed until about 5 years old. Your questions is really way too simple. Way too many factors to consider, but I say no he is too heavy.

Herd Behavior:

He is being a horse that is trying to test other horses and see if he can move up in the pecking order. The other horses could run away or chase him or make him stop if they wanted or could stay away from him. If you don't know his age, he may be younger, this is normally behavior of a younger horse around 4 or 5ish, but this horse could have been in a stall his entire life and does not know how to be a horse, how to be in a herd and is trying to figure it out. The herd will teach him in time, just let them work it out. A bite here and there and a kick here and there, is all normal horse stuff. They are just being horses.

ANSWER: I am a firm believer that a horse needs a herd. A lone horse is miserable and develops emotional, mental and stress related problems. I would put them both with the herd. Even a bottom horse plays a role and has a job in a herd. Every herd member is needed and valued in a herd. Even if you think the low horse only gets pushed away, they are needed to keep the herd strong and always have a challenger.

I say you are never doing a horse a favor by isolating him and thinking you are protecting or helping him.

Put them in the herd, it will do everybody good, the herd will be bigger and feel safer, everyone will have a job and you will notice a change and see that they are all better for it. It may take a week or two as much as a month, but stay out of it and let the herd work it out.

Hi Jill, I got this question in the questions pool. This could be from many reasons, but I think it is a simple herd response. Any new herd member will affect the herd and behavior of all members. First there are pecking order issues. since the donkey is smaller and may appear as a young colt, the geldings could be taking it under their wings and protecting it, this would bring out a much stronger leadership role from them. Before the donkey, the herd was set and not major issues so leadership was not that important, now they have a mission, they have a job and they are doing it well. As time goes on it may settle down, but anytime a new baby is introduced to a herd new stronger leaders emerge and they step up to the job of being protectors and leaders... All horses are leaders and all are followers, it all depends who else is around as to which one the horse becomes.

I noticed in the picture you have nylon halter, when means you have buckles and metal and probably a metal snap on your lead rope. I always suggest getting rid of all that and get a nice rope halter with a lead rope with NO snap. This always seems to calm horses and give much

better control. Even though control does not seem to be an issue, it will mean more and not scare the horse as much when you correct or say NO.

As for the lips and mouthiness, this could be from lots of things. Took from mom early, left on mom too long, insecure, curiosity, exploring, boredom and others. My guess is boredom. I think most mouthy horses are smarter, they have been handled in a way that has not discouraged this and now they explore and are always learning. Some say the tail chewing is a mineral or vitamin deficiency, not sure if that is true but make sure horse has a salt and mineral block available. If a horse wants it to stop they will stop him from chewing, however in a stall or confined area, a horse would rather let it happen just to have horse contact so this tends to happen much more in stall environments.

I did an article on this topic (nipping) and here is a link to it.

<http://www.equestrianlife.com/articles.php?func=view&id=127>

I always see more so called problems and issues when horses are not kept in pasture with a herd. Putting horses in at night, separating them create anxiety, which creates stress, which turns into vices (chewing, kicking, swaying, cribbing, wind sucking, etc.) Putting a horse out more, leaving them with friends and herds, and not locking them up always seem to help in most any situation. It is almost like the cure all and it works more time than not. If you leave this horse out in pasture with a herd for for two weeks, I would bet you a chewed lead rope that the behavior would stop or at least get a lot better.

This horse is still a baby at 3, this will go away and get less as the horse gets closer to five. I would not make a big deal about it.

Let the horse spend time being a horse and not in a stall and the problem will fix it self.

Answer: Without seeing the horse no way to tell, but if he is not rolling I would think it is more than just saddle sore. Rolling aligns the spine and helps stretch the back, if he is not rolling, it sounds more than saddle issues. Riding is tough on the back, riding with a bad saddle is even worse, and jumping is the worst, so you are doing just about everything you could to put pressure and hurt the back. I would not do anything until a vet or laser checks out. As for bute, that can be bad since it hides pain and the horse will do things it should not do since it does not feel pain. If you leave horse alone and no bute, it will not do anything that hurts, so you will see how bad it is, if you bute, you may think he is getting better, but he may not be.....

Well first you say he was neglected by the last owner and you are trying to get on him way too fast. You are being a strong leader, you are not seen as the leader since the horse will tell you this by kicking and biting. Just because this horse is gelded, it does not mean that he suddenly forgets how to be a stallion. It can take months or a year for this change to take place. You need to treat him like a horse, it does not matter if he is a stud or gelding, he gets treated as a lower horse. You cannot be friends or nice to this horse until he knows you are the boss and decides not to push you or test you or move you over you.

You do this by moving his feet, changing his direction, stopping him movement and making sure he knows you move him he does not move you, he does not bite your kick at you unless he wants a whole mess of trouble. Trouble like you attacking his butt, you making him move that butt away from you to avoid getting hit with a rope, teaching him that anytime his butts gets near you, you are going to hit and get it, then he will not have time to think about kicking you. When and if he tries to bite you, you drive your elbow into his mouth like you are trying to knock out his teeth. It will only take once or twice and the biting will be done.

The only way you can help this horse is to push him like a crazy man and make him think you going to eat him if he messes with you, once that point is clear then you can slowly get nicer and kinder and start to build a relationship, but this horse has to know that you can and will get busy if he messes with you. Threats and lite hits or slaps will only tell this horse you are weak, you have to let this horse know you are the boss, you are higher, you can move his feet, you can make him uncomfortable, you can make him run and if he wants to be comfortable, he has to play by your rules. Tough love is what horses understand, it makes it clear to them and that is what they do and that is what they want. He is being clear with you, he thinks you are lower, he thinks you are weak, he thinks he can take you, he thinks he can kick you, he thinks he can bite you.....he thinks this since you have not make it clear that he can't do any of those

things.

Young horses always get more bites (lessons) than older ones. Young horses are immature, do not pay attention, want to explore and get into things and have not learned to respect higher horses. This mare is teaching the youngster lessons in paying attention, respecting elders, pay attention to where you are and what I (a higher horse) is telling you. If you don't pay attention this is what you get. This will make it easier for you to train this horse later. It may look worse than it really is. The older he gets the less he get those hard lessons since he will learn to pay attention and listen.

Ok you say you have 11 years of experience and you are 16. I am going to tell you that your horse experience when you were 5, 7, or 10, is not what I call horse experience. You have horse exposure, but most people don't let kids on horses that will hurt them, so the horses you have ridden or been with have probably not been problem or difficult horses. I am 48 years old and have many years of experience and there is still more about a horses that I don't know than I do know. To fully understand horses would take a life time of study. Most people who own horses never study them, they feed them, ride them and spend small amounts of time with them. You said your horse is not scared? How do you know? It sounds to me that it is scared. So who is right, the horse is. Only the horse knows what it is feeling, but we can sometime know what they are telling us. I think your horse is scared and does not see you as a strong leader that it trust. So it gets insecure when she is only with you. I always say it is the human's fault and NEVER the horse's fault. Your horse is feeling something and it is up to you to figure it out. The could be scared since it does not see you as a strong leader that it trust, so it wants to take over in order to keep herself safe.

ANSWER: Well, first I would say get her with another horse. Just because she can see a horse, that does not give her a sense of security. She needs to be with another horse so she can learn not to rear, learn some horse manners and be able to replace the loss of her mom. She is nervous, scared and alone. You say you have horse experience, but you are trying to use pain and control on a young horse that does not know anything. First I would say read more about horses so you understand their fear response and action. You are going to spoil this nice filly, not on purpose, but from not dealing with this horse as a horse. You are still thinking like a person and not like a horse.

This horse needs to learn that when something is on her nose or head, it will NOT hurt her. You are trying to over power and control this horse. You should be trying to talk to her in horse so she can understand you and trying to communicate and convince her to cooperate with you and that you will not hurt. You have failed to do this and now the little one is scared and does not trust you and is more worried about being hurt and trapped than in seeing you as a herd member and leader.

Read my horsemanship page on my site about herd behavior, if you read the entire page you will start to see horses different than you do now. As I tell most people, this is not a horse problem it is a people (you) problem. So you are asking for help, but you have to take the time to educate yourself about the horse, how they think, and how they react and why they react. They are prey animals and we are predators, this is the most unnaturally combination that could exist.

The best gift you can give a horse is knowledge and understanding about the horse.

Your welcome, not blaming the horse is the first step in accepting responsibility. It is a mindset that makes you improve yourself and then your horse gets better. So your horse did not knock you down, you were in his way, you did not give him a better escape path, you did teach him to know run into or over you, you did see that he was getting scared and was not able to move out of his way, you were not paying close enough attention, you allowed the situation to develop with that outcome,..... :) get it... The was was just where you put him, when you put him there and was only there because of you, it was never his choice.

enjoy the reading and don't be too hard on yourself when you start seeing how you caused or could have prevented a lot of things, just learn from it, help your horse be the horse you know he can be.

Please don's separate them. This is normal herd behavior and what you see is

different than what happens when are not there. First they get to know each other then one has to become higher, so they are working out their herd. Don't interfere, stay out of it and let them be horses. The worst thing for a horse is to be alone, as you noticed when you added they came together. The need each other to sleep and relax, but one has to be higher than the other, once the lower guy submits, they will be buds again.. You may see aggression when you are there, since the herd leader will want to keep you for him self and he thinks he should get any treats you bring and the lower horse should stand back and accept his place as lower and must respect the higher horse. Once you out of the equation they will do fine, but they know when you come out they get fed, the get attention or treats or taken out and the higher horse wants to be first and wants to make sure the lower horse stays back. The lower horse wants to come see you for whatever reason and is ignoring the higher horse, so he gets disciplined. This will all go away as they confirm their positions and they feel more secure about each other and you.

Stay out of it and watch from a distance without them knowing it (good luck) and you will see there is no reason for them to push each other. They only push for food or mares or to re-establish their position.

ANSWER: You are trying to treat him as if you feel sorry for him and as if you can make up for the bad that has happened to him. Forget that, treat him like a horse. You are causing this behavior. Accept that. You can change it and help this horse, but you have to understand horses and understand herd behavior. Horses see the world as horses and herds, you and this horse is a herd of two. In a herd you are either higher or lower. You are lower, you have told this horse you are lower, you act like you are lower and you let the horse treat you as if you are lower. So you are causing this behavior. Read my horsemanship page, you will see horses differently and will understand them better. This horse is lost and is asking for a leader, be that leader. A horse feels safer and better if he has a strong leader that gives him good direction and makes the rules clear. That don't mean you have to be mean or aggressive, but you do have to understand horses so you can talk to this horse in his language. You are talking human and the horse is confused. The stress you are feeling the horse is feeling 10 times worse. You have to be confident and aware, not strong as 40 year old. If you do it right you will not need much strength or power, you need to use your brain to learn so you can talk horse and communicate with this horse in a way he can understand and feel safe.

ANSWER: Well there are always things you can do, it is if you are willing or able to. This horse has a troubled past, all race horses and most sport horses don't have very good lives. They are not owned or cared about for anything other then to win and or make money. It sounds like he found a great home and you given him a much better life than he would have had. If he kept alone, then I would get him a buddy. A horse needs other horses to feel safe, they all get very insecure when alone. So all horses are what people call Buddy sour or herd bound, it is their instinct so they can stay alive and feel safe. If he does not have another horse to play with, to sleep with, to graze with, to feel safe with, this only increases his drive to get to another horse. So that is one thing. Another option is to get a pony horse, take a second horse with you so he will have a buddy with him, once he gets good at that, then you slowly wean him off slowly.

I think too many people try and prevent or stop too much. Horses are smart and they can figure things out if people let them and help them. The more you try and stop him and prevent him the more he feels trapped, restricted, and unable to move. Horses rarely rear unless someone is restricting their movement, pulling on their mouth or head. Horses normally always pick to run if they can.

Look at this not has you have to try and prevent this. If he wants to see horses, lets go see them, let him release that energy, let him satisfy his strong instinctual drive and go see the horses, then once he gets there he goes to work, not mean or mad, just work, he has to back up, flex, go in circles, change directions, anything to keep him busy and paying attention to you. Every time he is with other horse, no problem but you and him get to do lots of training and work, he may get to trot around the horses, he may get to follow them in reverse, he walks backwards to be with them while they walk forward, you want him to think, damn when I am with other horses, I get my butt worked off, soon he will think, it is easier to be away from horse so I can relax and not work so hard. This will not happen after once or twice, it will take consistency on your part. Doing the same thing all the time so the horse Knows what to expect and has a choice.

I think you, like many others, are so caught up in controlling him, making him listen, showing

him who is boss, that you are making this a fight in stead of using the horse's natural drive and figuring out a way to use that drive to help train the horse. You have a natural draw that you horse wants, figure out ways to use that to work your horse and make you both better and stop focusing on how to stop that drive. He is just being a horse, work with this as your problem and not the horse's. You are smarter, this horse has already taught you many lessons about horses and you have learned well, but don't stop. He is making you try and learn different ways to handle a problems, embrace this as he is helping you get better, The horse is always the teacher, too many forget that and they thing they are the teacher or trainer.

Hope this helps,

Read my site, and remember when you walk to pasture, don't just focus on the gate or your destination, don't walk a straight line, play with your horse on the way, give a treat, have him backup, spin him, disengage his hindquarters, give him something to think about it instead of the gate, have him paying attention to you and not the gate, show him you are a strong and confident leader and he will not want to get to the gate so fast, he will feel safe and will want to be with you. You cannot feel safe if you are scared or intimidated. You feel this since you don't know and don't understand, read and learn, this will go away. Knowledge is power.

This sounds like an adjustment period. He has lost an old friend and now a new younger herd member is there. He will snap out of it and will soon be with the herd. You can try and stimulate the herd by driving a car, tractor of other vehicle around them and just move them a bit, they will think they are being chased and will run as a herd and will all get closer. All herd gets closer when there are threats. So scaring them a bit will cause them to run together, but letting them work it out is best. They will come together once the pecking order is defined and set, this may take a few weeks.

Don't separate them, horses always do better as a herd and are much worse off when alone or separated. Let the herd work it out, in a few months you will see one herd with new relationships. Hang in there.

ANSWER: As usual, this is a people created problem and not a horse issue. These horses are doing what horses do, they push lower horses, they try and establish dominance so they can be higher in the pecking order. The herd has to have a strict pecking order to ensure the survival of the herd. Only the strongest horse can be leader, so horse have to test each other to see who is higher and who is longer. Totally normal. However, when people put up fences, hot wires, gates, and dividers, trying to protect the horse and to feel like they are keeping their horse safe, they make it worse. A horse does best and feels best when he is in a herd. All horses bite and all get bit, all kick and all get kicked, it is the way of the horse.

Understanding herd behavior will help you and your horse, since a horse does the same things to people since the horse sees their world as a herd and you are either higher or lower in the herd.

I go into this subject in more detail on my horsemanship page of my site.

I still think the aggression is caused by us getting involved. I never rescue a horse from a herd. The horse needs to learn to show respect and to treat the higher horses correctly, per the herd. This gelding is probably more aggressive since the he thinks this mare is his and all horse get more aggressive when new horses are introduced since they do not want to move down in the pecking order and there are benefits to being higher. The fact that this gelding cannot correct the other gelding and cannot push him, make his show respect and since the other gelding feels safe and does not run away, he is showing disrespect to the higher caged horse, so this increases the aggression. One horse feels safe and show disrespect and the other horses can't correct him and is trapped so once again I say "we, people cause this to be a bigger deal and make it worse by trying to protect or help" Horses have survived for thousands of years without your help or my help, but then we, being the know it all humans, want to think we can do it better and we need to help and we need to protect, and we need to get involved. We don't and when we do, the horse has to pay for our meddling and it is worse on the horse, so what do we (you) do, you get more involved and try to help more by putting up hot wires and bigger fences, so the aggression gets worse and more intense and continues because it is never settled, it is never worked out and somehow, we want to blame the horse for being "mean or really aggressive". IT IS NEVER THE HORSES FAULT. So put up hot wires, put up bigger fences and protect this horse and when one day the two horses meet or

one gets out and one or both horses get hurt or has to be put down, know that it will be your fault for trying to protect them.

Somehow I think you are going to do what you want to do and no matter what I say is going to change things. So I am somehow confused as to what you are looking for. I gave you my advice and opinion, I gave a reference page and told you what I think is the problem.

I am trying to be the voice of the horse and you want to tell me you have never seen such an aggressive horse. I know horses pretty well and I think these horses are the way they are because of people sticking their nose in the natural order of herds and trying to protect things that do much better without human interference. I stand by my take on this situation and my suggestion stands, put the horses out in a pasture, let them work it out and it will be done and over in a few days and they will all be buds and will be one structured safe, close herd.

ANSWER: You need to be careful walking this pony, if he is nipping at your knees he is showing you dominance. He will get away from you and run away and may get hit by a car. This horse knows that you do not know anything horses so he is testing you and figuring out. I keep a safe distance from him, ever time he gets away with a bite, a head toss, a pull, buck or rear, he will shortly be kicking and he will kick you hard and could hurt you very badly even if he is small.

If you really want to understand horses, read my site, it will help.

Well you have a few options. You can ring a bell every time you feed and the horses will learn to come running when they hear the bell or feed pan banging or whatever else you want to use. Then you can either put some food in one stall and then lock the lead mare in while the others eat.

I would just teach them not to fight. They only fight for competition over the food. If the herd is established, been together for more than a month or two, then just put out food near the stalls in different piles at least two horse lengths apart. If you have 3 horses, put out five or six piles, if you have 4 horse put our 7 or 8 piles. This will get less over time, but at first you want to have lots of piles so they can all get pushed off and will have another pile to go to. That way there is no reason to fight for only one or two piles. So after a week or so of this they will get tired of chasing each other off and will know that all piles are the same so no reason to push. As time goes by, each week, go down one pile until you have the same number of piles as horses. The fewer piles the more apart they need to be, after they adjust to one pile each, then you can slowly move them closer and soon you will see them share. The more secure the horse is with their position, the less they will need to push each other off to prove their pecking order. It will take time, but don't RUSH it or it will take longer and will get worse.

Food is the number one reason horses fight, so as long as they become secure with the herd, they will not see the need to fight. If two horses don't get along, they will stay away from each other as long as they know they have a pile to go to. If you put food in both stalls, they should learn to eat in one stall, maybe the head mare will push at first but it will get easier as they get to know each other.

Give them time to herd up and become buddies before you try and get them to share food. The slow way is the fast way with horses. Well you want a horse and a horse wants other horses. Keeping this horse by itself will make her act out, develop bad habits and can make her mean to people.

If you can afford one horse then you should not have a horse or keep it with other horses. You will have continued problems with her keeping her alone. You have already seen this develop in just four months, in a year it will be much worse.

You say the horses are mean at the other place, this tells me you do not understand horses very well. Horses are not mean, people are mean and make horses mean. Horses are herd animals not solitary pets. If you really understand horses you would never have got a baby and planned on keeping it alone.

Some may tell you to get a goat, get a cat or some other animal, a horse needs another horse, they need a herd to feel safe or it creates many problems, you are seeing just a few.

The problem is you, since you ride her then you are causing this. Horses only have problems

when people create them. You need to pay more attention to what you are doing. What is happening when she does this. Are you pulling on the bit are you trying to make do something she does not want to do, is it the same thing, is the same area.

This sounds like she is sour about you riding her too hear or too fast, a common problem with show or competing horses.

Ground work may help but only if you change, you can't expect your horse to change if you keep doing the same thing.

Read my site about round penning and sacking out, both will increase your horse's respect, if you do it right.

Well I like your last questions "what am I doing wrong". I am a firm believer that most horse problems are our problems and not the horse. Here is what you said, recently bought, working with horse, have him step out of my space, move his hindquarters, step to side, consistently backing him out of my space, he gives ugly face, hard to buddy up, he has lousy attitude "towards me", I drive him away..... This is from a one paragraph email and if I was this horse I would not want to be around you either. I see and hear a lot of things here and mostly with you.

You appear to be good at being a pushy leader, you know how to push a horse around good, you know how to show a horse you won't be weak, but I don't think you know how to listen to horse. Anyone can push a horse around it does not take much horsemanship, but it takes work and understanding to be flexible enough to listen, to try and help the horse find the right answer and not force or make the horse obey and be a slave. A horse pins his ears for other reasons than to be disrespectful, they can do it when scared or backed in a corner or feel they are about to be pushed or bullied.

This horse is only four, he is still a baby in my book, even though he is big strong and can kill you, he is still a baby mentally. You don't know his entire history, how he was treated, mistreated or abandoned. So from the horse's view here is what I think he sees. Great another human that wants to push me around, I get taken to a new place with new and unfamiliar surroundings, I get taken from my friends and comfort, I am ripped away from where I felt safe and now in the strange place with strange surroundings, I get this human that acts like she wants to be my friend but all she does is come in push me around, tell me I have a lousy attitude and acts like a leader that is not confident or secure since she is always SHOWING me she can push me around???? So why should I trust her, why should I believe her, why should I follow her and put my like in her hands?

There is a saying that goes "A good horseman can hear a horse talk, a great horseman can hear a horse whisper, but a bad horseman can't hear a horse even if it screams."

Not saying you are bad, just think you need to back away from all the DVDs, clinics, books and people that say, "Show them who is boss", "make him respect your space"... and all the other advice from those who don't know or really understand a horse.

A horse is a reflection of the owner, look at the way you act around this horse and see if you are type of person you would want to be around if you were a horse. Try listening and understanding where this horse is coming from, why he does what he does, what are you doing to cause him to do what he is doing, what you can do to help find the right answer. You are old enough to advance and grow in your horsemanship past the beginner stage of pushing a horse around.

This horse is giving you an opportunity to grow, he is trying to teach the way of the horse, he will help understand better and grow, if you step back and listen and become the student and not the teacher.

Cut him some slack and you might be surprised how fast he comes around. Spend time with him, show him that you can be around him and with him without pushing or requiring things from him, build a relationship of trust and partnership and not of owner or boss and employee. Only you can change what you are doing, if you do the horse will as well.

Rick

All the issues you talked about are normal, she is used to be ridden in open lands without all this scary stuff going on. I think you are trying to handle it wrong with MAKING HER STAND, this shows me that you do not understand a horse. A horse's worst fear is to be trapped and unable to run since running is how they stay alive, so this horse is being normal. She is bucking since you are probably hurting her when you MAKE her stand and stop her feet from moving. You are getting scared and insecure since you are seeing her fear increase, because of you. Forget that you rode many years ago that means nothing to me or the horse. The horse does not care how good you are, how many medals you may have won, a horse wants to feel safe with you and see you as a strong and capable leader. If you are pulling on the reins, MAKING the horse stand when she is scared only makes her not trust you, makes her think you do not know much about a horse and makes her not want to be with you. You don't want her to run since you are scared. Stop trying to MAKE her deal with her fear and start helping her deal with it. Show her it is ok to be scared and you will help her and not hurt her, and not force her or MAKE her do anything. I would say you are more scared than you were in your younger years and are more careful and are more nervous about getting hurt, your horse reads all this and reacts to it. When you deal with your fear better, your horse will deal with her's better.

As for you comment about if you return the horse it will end up at the abattoir, this sounds very selfish and it does show a favorable side of you. You say you have come attached to the horse and then say you know it will be killed if you give it back and then say YOU WANT a pony you can ride and not just a pet. So let me get this right, as long as the horse lets you scare the crap out of it by forcing next to fast and dangerous traffic, then you will keep it, otherwise you send back to someone you know will kill it.

Welcome to the world of horses, people use them, take from them and when they don't do everything just how we want, we get rid of them. I would rather see you take the horse to open land and let her free and let it take her chances with the wild animals than sentence her to a sure death by returning her. Who knows, by setting her free maybe someone will find her who loves horses, loves their beauty and will take care of her just for joy of sharing with them and having them in their life.

Well, you got me. I have never seen this or heard of this. Without knowing more about the herd dynamics it is hard to say. I have seen stallions kill babies or another stallion, I have seen mares severely discipline young horses, but not seen a young mare try and take out a gelding. I was not there but are you sure it was not playful? Another thing could be she thought he was in pain and dying, so she was trying to end it for him. No one knows for sure how deep horses think. Horses in the wild will sometime towards a pack of wolves if they are injured or dying almost as if to say end it fast.

Not knowing the condition of your gelding, the relationship with the herd, maybe this mare was not trying to kill him and was just trying to move up in the pecking order.

We can only guess, but I would have to go with my gut and say that keeping them apart and them together is a factor. This messes up the herd dynamics and don't allow things to get settled, worked out and established. I find it hard to believe that by the time you saw this, reacted, ran out to pasture and got to your gelding that if she wanted him dead, he would be dead, but I was not there.

So that is my take, sorry I could not be more specific.

Without seeing you I can't be for sure. But your horse is telling you that you are not communicating right, that you are not sending clear signals, that he does not understand what you want, that he does not see you as his leader.

Round penning does not make friends, it teaches a horse to hear you, to learn what you are asking, to understand that you can move his feet, you can stop his feet and you can control his direction and speed. It seems the horse has taught you these lessons.

Release is the key to teaching horses. I discuss this in my round penning section on my horsemanship page of my web site. Read that and it should clear things up, if you still don't understand after you read that, write me back.

ANSWER: Horses are very protective of their herd. She sees you as her herd member and is protecting you and telling other horses that you belong to her. This can be bad, since if she sees you as lower than her she will start telling you what to do and if you don't listen she will treat you as her herd member.

Well it depends. Right with horses is very subjective. Most people, including me, keep their horses a little more padded. Too much weight is bad for the horse, bad for legs and feet, but unfed horses are not good either. I would say it is a lot like people, being a little thin is better than being a little over weight. I do not like seeing ribs, I like to be able to at least feel and find ribs, some horse are so fat I can't find a rib. So there is a happy medium.

As for this guy, I think he is full of horse pucky. Unless she is being worked very hard she should not be losing weight unless she is not getting good food. I know lots of jerks that will take good hay and feed crap hay to cut their cost. So if you provide hay, she may be fed other junk. That is why I don't let other people feed or handle my horses. Your horse is your responsibility. You put the horse there, you allowed someone else to care for it and you let your horse be neglected, since I think this horse is definitely being neglected. I know all the reasons, you are busy, you are unable, you could not help it, you have kids, you have a job, none that mean crap to your horse that is not being fed. Horses will eat their own crap if they are not fed. So the sniffing means she is probably already doing this since she is so hungry and unfed.

Get your horse out, report this guy to the local law enforcement for abuse, and post to note at the local feed stores that this guy is a cheat and does not feed horses at his place.

Back to your horse, if you don't let other care for your horse, you would not have any of these problems, but problems for you is not my concern, your horse has to pay for your mistakes. Make it right.

I get a lot of this questions. I can't fix a horse over the email and don't want you to think I can, only you or your daughter or someone handling the horse can show it what it can and cannot do. Beating the horse after it happens does nothing. Prevention is better than treatment. If you are there when something happens, and can correct the horse within 3 seconds of it happening then correct away, anything after 3 seconds the horse just learns to dislike people and may get mean. This horse is just being a horse. I just answered another questions about this so I am going to paste the answer so you can read it.

Previous answer. You are doing ground work and making the horse respect you may or may not help your daughter. I would lean more to will not help enough. If horses are handled more by good leaders and by people that understand horses, then they become less resistance to all people. However, if they are handled more by kids, not strong leaders or people that don't understand horses, then they tend to not respect all people and will test and push people more.

I get questions from parents a lot and I tell them mostly the same, since you are asked the question and you are doing research and you are trying to improve your knowledge, that means nothing to the horse when the child is handling her.

So anytime you can get a horse more in tune to respect you, then he MAY be less likely to test your daughter. But, since he already knows your daughter is weak (to her) I think she will continue to disrespect her and push her.

I am reluctant to tell parents to make their kid learn. Horses are something that should be fun, when medals, awards, ribbons and speed or time is involved, the horse and child loses.

You can make your daughter read books about horses, try and educate her about horses. You can make up some test to give her from what you have learned. I see too many kids being mean to horses because their parents told me to "show the horse who is boss". The horse knows she is stronger and can push your D around. You can only change this if you handle the horse more, are with your daughter all the time (hard to do) so you can correct the horse if is disrespectful to your daughter. Older horses will protect and keep higher horses away from the weak or younger horses in a herd, but they are there all the time so it works.

I have seen kids that get it, they understand horses without being mean, they simply push and move the horse every time the horse pushes them, but they are consistent and do it all the

time so the horse stops testing and stops pushing so much. Consistency with kids is not always easy, they get distracted easy, they just want to relax, have fun and not be so worried, like adults.

I would have your daughter read books while sitting with the horse, spend time with the horse, the more time she spends with the horse, since this horse is the lead mare, she may take her under her wing and see her as her herd and not want to push her so much, the flip side to this is the horse will expect your D to listen to her so she may correct her like another horses, with a bite or kick.

This can be a dangerous situation, since your D knows this horse will kick she needs to be away and make sure she always has an escape and distance from the horse. If she acts too scared the horse will see this as weakness and will exploit it. Any time the horse shows any signs of ear pinning, kicks, or bites with you there, you need to make this horse think it just committed suicide, any disrespect to your child needs to be addressed immediately, not 5 mins later or not after your child leaves, tells you and then you go out and give it a lesson, if you can't correct it within 3 seconds, it is too late and will not train the horse and will only make the horse fear you and people and may make the horse more aggressive towards people.

So your situation is not unique, but there is not an easy answer either. Read my site and try to really understand horses better and then see if you can come up with ways pass this on to your D, have her do exercises with the horse, in order to teach her, you must first know the subject.

Don't blame the horse for anything, it is only being a horse, it lives in your world and is trying to figure out the rules and when it doubt it will do what horses do. In your photo I think I see that you are using a leverage bit. This is painful and hurts the horse, it will not teach respect and will teach the horse pain and more resistance. If your daughter can't ride this horse in a halter, then she should not be riding it. No spurs and no leverage bits for kids, it only pisses the horse off and gets kids hurt.

So I would keep your daughter away from the horse's feet. You did not tell how old your daughter is so that would matter. Just because you say your daughter is a competent rider does not mean she understands horses, does not mean she understand around respect, fear, pressure, release, advance, retreat, pushing back, what a horse test is, why horses test, what to do to get the horse's trust and respect... I know lots and lots of people, older adults, that have "ridden their entire life" and "owned horses their entire life" and they can no more answer these or know this either, but they will be the first to tell you how to fix things and how to handler things.

Knowledge and understanding of the horse will help you and keep you safer than than \$10,000 worth of the best and fanciest equipment and all the advice in the world from the best so called trainers, clinicians or "life long horse owners".

Read and study the horse so you have the knowledge to fix this. Selling and buying horses cost more than the expense and time. It is bad for horses, it is bad for you and you will NEVER get what you are told, since all you get is a horse, after that, you teach the horse bad or good. So I could give you the best horse in world and in a few weeks or a month, you or your daughter could teach it to kick, be disrespectful, buck, run off, pull, or you could teach it to continue to be the best horse in world. The horse you buy is not the issue, what you do with a horse teaches and trains a horse.

It sounds like you are doing some right things. The answer to your question yes and no. You doing ground work and making the horse respect you may or may not help your daughter. I would lean more to will not help enough. If horses are handled more by good leaders and by people that understand horses, then they become less resistance to all people. However, if they are handled more by kids, not strong leaders or people that don't understand horses, then they tend to not respect all people and will test and push people more.

I get questions from parents a lot and I tell them mostly the same, since you are asked the question and you are doing research and you are trying to improve your knowledge, that means nothing to the horse when the child is handling her.

So anytime you can get a horse more in tune to respect you, then he MAY be less likely to

test your daughter. But, since he already knows your daughter is weak (to her) I think she will continue to disrespect her and push her.

I am reluctant to tell parents to make their kid learn. Horses are something that should be fun, when medals, awards, ribbons and speed or time is involved, the horse and child loses.

You can make your daughter read books about horses, try and educate her about horses. You can make up some test to give her from what you have learned. I see too many kids being mean to horses because their parents told me to "show the horse who is boss". The horse knows she is stronger and can push your D around. You can only change this if you handle the horse more, are with your daughter all the time (hard to do) so you can correct the horse if is disrespectful to your daughter. Older horses will protect and keep higher horses away from the weak or younger horses in a herd, but they are there all the time so it works.

I have seen kids that get it, they understand horses without being mean, they simply push and move the horse every time the horse pushes them, but they are consistent and do it all the time so the horse stops testing and stops pushing so much. Consistency with kids is not always easy, they get distracted easy, they just want to relax, have fun and not be so worried, like adults.

I would have your D read books while sitting with the horse, spend time with the horse, the more time she spends with the horse, since this horse is the lead mare, she may take her under her wing and see her as her herd and not want to push her so much, the flip side to this is the horse will expect your D to listen to her so she may correct her like another horses, with a bite or kick.

This can be a dangerous situation, since your D knows this horse will kick she needs to be away and make sure she always has an escape and distance from the horse. If she acts too scared the horse will see this as weakness and will exploit it. Any time the horse shows any signs of ear pinning, kicks, or bites with you there, you need to make this horse think it just committed suicide, any disrespect to your child needs to be addressed immediately, not 5 mins later or not after your child leaves, tells you and then you go out and give it a lesson, if you can't correct it within 3 seconds, it is too late and will not train the horse and will only make the horse fear you and people and may make the horse more aggressive towards people.

So your situation is not unique, but there is not an easy answer either. Read my site and try to really understand horses better and then see if you can come up with ways pass this on to your D, have her do exercises with the horse, in order to teach her, you must first know the subject.

Don't blame the horse for anything, it is only being a horse, it lives in your world and is trying to figure out the rules and when it doubt it will do what horses do. In your photo I think I see that you are using a leverage bit. This is painful and hurts the horse, it will not teach respect and will teach the horse pain and more resistance. If your daughter can't ride this horse in a halter, then she should not be riding it. No spurs and no leverage bits for kids, it only pisses the horse off and gets kids hurt.

Horses normally don't trust sexes, they either trust or don't trust people. I have worked with many horses that I have been told they do not like men, but they had no problem with me. A horse has a keen sense for reading people, so they size people up. Men tend to be a little more direct and aggressive or assertive. Women tend to be more passive, soft and slow, a fearful horse will normally be more fearful of direct or assertive people. A good horseman can tone this down or turn it up. It is not a horse problem, it is a people problem.

If you just feed a horse he will not respect you or see you as his leader. You have to require things from a horse to get them to respect you. So move them, make them move, make them see you as a leader who can move them, otherwise they move you, they run from you, they learn you cannot stop them, you cannot control their direction, speed, or stop them, so they think they are smarter and they should be leader and they should not submit to your leadership or direction.

I have a section on my web site about horses that have not been handled. Lots of pressure and release (advance and retreat) you can keep him enclosed for a week or so, but if he was with other horses he will be nervous and it may be better to let him in the herd for a couple of weeks so he can feel safe at his new place. Don't baby him and try to be too slow and careful.

Be normal and lots of pressure and release. The most important thing for new young ones are sacking out, get him to handle his fear. You said he is colt, if he is not gelded that should happen by three or so, I like to wait longer some do early, the longer you wait the better I think. Reading my site will help you understand horses better, lots of handling will help later, don't baby him and let him push you, pin his ears, kick or bite, he has to be taught that any behavior like that is bad and will get him pushed hard so he better not do it. Well without seeing this first hand, it is hard to tell for sure. It may be a slight resistance showing in the ears, she may not like to trot and shows this with her ears. If it not progressing to anything more serious, it may go away with time. Not sure if she does this while on a lunge line, but you could try and round pen her, change her speed and direction until she really looks to you for relief. She will look and ask if she will ask to stop and when she does her ears will go forward to you, timing is important, so stop and release immediately the second her ears go forward, no pressure, once you get her to associate ears forward with release, then you can work on how long her ears are forward before she gets release.

Again not knowing everything, ears back is common sign of being sour and not enjoying her job. Too much work and not enough play and relaxing time together can cause this, and I always get defensive responses when I say this, but if you are not doing this then don't worry about, but remember just because you or someone else thinks it is not too much, the horse is the one that determines this, not people. Just something else to consider.

The other thing is maybe joint pain, other pain or saddle issues. I always try and provoke the response so I can see if I can create it so then I can figure out how to stop it. When I am told, something happens and I don't know why, I don't believe this. Something causes this response, you, the trot, pain, sourness, respect issues, something, until you determine what causes it, it is hard to fix.

I would trot her on line, off line, towards me, with a tight rein, loose rein, no leg, lots of leg, small circles, large circles, straight, slow trot, fast trot, leaning back, leaning forward, do everything you can to change the trot, NOT all at once or in one day, just explore ways to see if you cause this response, then it may give you a better way to deal with it.

As I said before this is about the horse feeling safe and secure with you and seeing you as a strong leader. Only you change this. You need to really understand a horse to change it. You can guess at it, you can't try, you can't have someone else do it, you have study horses, understand them, know how they think, how they act, what they respond to and what they fear. Once you understand all that you can show the horse you understand them, you can talk to the horse in their language, they will know you understand them and that you are the leader and they will trust you and see you as the leader. When all this happens most all other problems go away. But all of this is about you. Your horse is only a horse. But until you really understand what a horse is all about, you cannot address any problem. So read my horsemanship page and my horseman tips page, it will help you see horses differently and that will be the first step in fixing what you are doing so the problem will go away. That is the problem of her behavior when you are handling her. As for the being alone part, let her be with other horses as much as you can. The more she is with other horses, the less she will be acting out to get to other horses.

I get this question a hundred times a year. Only you can fix this with you and only your son can fix it with him. A horse needs a strong leader, he needs to know his boundaries and know who is alpha, this is a very strong instinct with horses. Your trainer is right in one way, but I don't agree with him completely. The herd dynamic has little to do with you or your son. When your horse is with you, you and your horse is a herd of two. So no matter how horses are in a herd of horses, when you take him out, it is now just you and him. So you are the problem, you need to give this horse better direction, you need to understand horses better so you can help this horse. This is NOT bad or acting out, or being mean, he is being a totally normal horse. You are causing this behavior by confusing your horse, not making the rules clear, not being a strong and clear leader and not giving this horse good, consistent, clear direction, so he gets confused and thinks he has to take over, so he does. He treats you like a lower horse in his herd since you act like a lower horse. He is only being a horse with strong instincts to either be led or to follow. If you lead he will follow, if you allow him to lead he will lead. I tell people this all the time. Read my web site, maybe it will take you a while, maybe 4 or 5 hours, not in one day but read it, you will see horses differently after you read it. You will understand them better. Read other books, learn and study the horse, they are complex and very unique animals that most horse owners never see. This horse is

looking for a leader and you are not it and he knows it, so he thinks he has to move up and pick up the slack since when he is with you, you are unsure, not specific, not clear with you directions, not clear with when you ask something there is only one right answer. You are trying to be nice and loving and caring, horses don't care about that, they want a good strong leader, that is why makes them feel safe, that is what makes them want to be with you, anything else is weak and confusing to a horse.

As for your herd situation, I would absolutely put your mare back in a herd. Horses play, correct, train, release stress and many others things in a herd. Without a herd, horses act out and get confused and question their position and existence. Put horses together every chance you get. All geldings just want to play, with a mare they have purpose, they will push and fight to be better, to be a leader to be the one that impresses the mare and will want to be seen as a leader, as strong, it makes them better.

What you are describing does not make sense. I don't know you or the horse, but I never assume it is the horse's fault, so I normally address the problem as it is owner created. This sounds like dominant and fear related behavior. So without seeing it, it is hard to diagnose. I would make sure his ears and eyes are good, lots of strange behavior happens when a horse start losing sight since they are confused and scared, so they can get more aggressive. Since you say he is doing this to other horses as well as people, it leads me to believe it is physical and not handling. However, even if it is physical, if he felt safe and secure with a strong human handler, and received good, fair handling, he would not do what he is doing.

Having a nine year old (without much experience) ride and handle the horse would be my next guess and I would say it 85 percent that this is the issue. Kids don't understand release, pressure, fear instincts and how a horse thinks. Horses only put up with pressure from higher horses, period. A small child is training a horse that is larger and stronger and they are smaller, less experience, can't control a horse and teach many other bad lessons. Even very experience small children have a hard time convincing a horse that they are alpha and they are higher. Normally kids resort to pain, fear, bit bits, stud chains and bully techniques. This can make a horse sour. The other side is they are too nice and just feed and baby and pamper the horse and the horse see this as weakness, does not respect them so the horse pushes a little, tests a lot and learns that they are really stronger and smarter, so the horse becomes alpha. I would try and find a good horse person. This term is very subjective. A good horse person is not just someone who says they are good or someone who says they are a trainer, or someone who has owned horses forever, I mean a horseman, someone who is quite, soft, yet very effective with horses. Find one of these if you can and have them take a look and handle the horse, if the behavior is stopped and or prevented then the answer is clear, it is you, your daughter or others who handle the horse, that is the problem.

Most times when people ask me a questions it is always what is wrong with my horse he does x y z, when all the problems are looked at from it is the horse's problem, it normally means it is NOT the horse. Anyone who truly understands horses, knows it is never the horse's fault and people cause every problem a horse has. So when someone asked me to help their horse, I know they don't understand horses, when someone ask me to help them, then I know I have a willing person.

This horse has been shown at shows, been trailered out a lot, been put in strange stalls, been forced into to scary situations at new arenas, new horses, unfamiliar environments, taken away from his friends and herd and handled and WORKED for ribbons and prizes. Although you may blanket him, feed him good grain, brush him and give him find stables, NONE of this is what a horse really needs.

A horse needs love, quality time, time with a herd, time with people WHEN THEY ARE NOT REQUIRING THINGS OF HIM, just time being with him and enjoying him. People never want to hear that they are the problem and they are causing a horse to do bad behavior. From my experience, I think this horse is soured and has had enough. He wants to be left alone, he does not want to be someone's pretty pony to win medals and ribbons, he only wants to be a horse, since that is what he born to be. So he has finally said enough is enough. He has figured out that the only way to get people from using him, pushing him is to act out, to take charge and to be aggressive. This happens to race horses all the time. If you find another a good horseman in your area and they handle this horse with no problem then it will confirm my assessment. Fixing this is whole new issue. First you have to accept that you caused it and want to fix it or you can keep looking for other reasons, spending vet bills, trying different food,

get bigger bits, try a stud chain or some other crazy ideas that people use to "fix" horses since they can't accept that they (or their child) are problem.

The only thing you have said that makes me slightly questions this is he has become disruptive in the herd. This does not make sense, but what some see as disruptive, I see as normal herd behavior, so not sure on this one without more details.

Without seeing and working the horse, and only getting your view of the situation, it is hard to give any other specific course of action.

Question: We have three mares two of which want to be the dominate one. We have them separated at home, but one day they got in together and had a kick fest, needless to say one had to be taken to the vet but was ok. We still have them separated but we are moving to Oregon and want to put them in together when we get there. Does anyone have any suggestions for us on a way to do this so they don't hurt each other? We have talked to several people who train and they say to put them in together at our now home and run them and then put them into the pasture together. My thought is since it will be a new place that they might not be so dominant towards each other if they get put in together at a new place, since one won't be there first. I am afraid of bringing them one after the other because then one will think it was their home first. Our new pasture will be two acres that is wide open so they will have plenty of room to get away from each other. Our third mare can be in with either one of them, so she's not a problem

[Move to top of page](#) ↑

A: lol, sorry, but I know you are not a guy and mean well but you are not €™ thinking like a horse €™. Most guys would say they will work it out and they will get tired of kicking. Most women want to protect, save and get way too involved. All horses kick and all bite and all want to be higher. The pecking order keeps order in the herd. These horses are training each other, learning from each other, both wanting to be lead horse to get the mare and both are making each other better and stronger, which makes the herd stronger, which makes them better survivors, which means they will have more lessons and knowledge to pass on to their off spring, which makes the herd stronger and the cycle continues. All normal horse behavior that most humans do not understand. Working the horses before you put them together will take some of the freshness off them, also putting out several small piles of hay (maybe 20 or 30) will keep them busy, make sure the piles are far enough apart that they have to move to get them and they cannot reach each other while eating. This will keep them focused on food and not each other. Removing corners from fences will help so they don €™t get trapped in the corner when they fight. And they will fight, it is their nature to move up and test leaders. Once you put them out, LEAVE, don €™t stand by the gate, ohh €™in and awhhh €™in which will create a draw and they may come to you which will bring them to the fence of gate and increase the chance of them getting trapped, cornered or hurt. It looks worse than it is, so don €™t watch. People that watch tend to want to stop it or help and then they end up making it worse and getting a horse hurt or separate the horses (which you did) and then create more aggression between the horses and increase the drive to fight. Once they are together, DON €™T feed them in one pile or you will cause them to fight, throw hay in several piles to they can pick, move, get pushed off and move without thinking there is only one pile of food and they have to fight to eat. There are two types of horses, those who are hurt and those who will be hurt. You can read my horsemanship page and it will explain herd behavior a little better.

Question: Since getting my prison trained mustang home (Adopted August 2009), he has been separate from our other horses. They can smell and touch through the panels. One day, he reared up and tried to mount our broodmare through the panels. We pulled her apart and put her into pasture for safety purposes. He and our paint mare have become such good friends. They are with each other now, and he has never been aggressive towards her. We are mixing him with our others slowly. Question is: Now he can't stop mounting her. I know he is gelded, but you wouldn't know it. It is literally, "eat, mount up and sleep." I have heard of this happening in the past with some geldings. Has anyone else experienced this with their horses? I know he hasn't seen a mare in a long time, but wow. :)

A: Read the other answer about keeping horses together. He could be proud cut or have a Cryptorchid (I explain this on my horseman tips page: www.thinklikeahorse.org) He could have been cut late so is still showing stud behavior. The mare will stop him when she wants. He is being a horse, if you don €™t understand horses, you tend to want to try and protect them and

save them and then end up hurting them or setting them up to fail. Put them together and let horses be horse and work things out like horses. I guess my question is so what if he mounts her? What is he hurting? And don't tell me about tearing down the fence, if you put them together and did not separate them the fence would not be an issue. Let them be horses, that is what they know and that is what they are best at.

Introducing New Horse to Herd:

I am a firm believer that a horse needs a herd. A lone horse is miserable and develops emotional, mental and stress related problems. I would put them both with the herd. Even a bottom horse plays a role and had a job in a herd. Every herd member is needed and valued in a herd. Even if you think the low horse only get pushed away, they are needed to keep the herd strong and always have a challenger.

I say you are never doing a horse a favor by isolating him and thinking you are protecting or helping him.

Put them in the herd, it will do everybody good, the herd will be bigger and feel safer, everyone will have a job and you will notice a change and see that they are all better for it. It may take a week or two as much as a month, but stay out of it and let the herd work it out.

Read my horsemanship page on my site I have a section on Herd behavior and it may make it clearer.

He is being a horse that is trying to test other horses and see if he can move up in the pecking order. The other horses could run away or chase him or make him stop if they wanted or could stay away from him. If you don't know his age, he may be younger, this is normally behavior of a younger horse around 4 or 5ish, but this horse could have been in a stall his entire life and does not know how to be a horse, how to be in a herd and is trying to figure it out. The herd will teach him in time, just let them work it out. A bite here and there and a kick here and there, is all normal horse stuff. They are just being horses.

Deep mud is not good for them. When you say a herd I think open area and pasture, not a paddock. If you have 7 or 8 horses in a small paddock area that can cause problems. This little guy is going to have a hard time at first. A herd is tough and does not cut slack and does not think emotional, everything is done for a reason. You see the strong ones attacking a new horse, I see the herd pecking being established and reinforced. As long as a horse has a way to get away and run, then they will work it out. Normally when horses get trapped in a fence corner, they have no where to run or it is over food.

A good way to introduce new herd members is to build a temp round pen in the middle of the pasture. That way the new guy can be inside and safe and the rest of the herd can come over, visit, push and squeal and they can get to know each other a little bit before being released. Two or three days in the middle will make the transition much easier.

The key is feeding time, no fence corners and room to run. Horse shoes in pasture is very dangerous and a leg can get broke so that is always a risk. Another option is to take the lead horse in the herd and put them together, they will bond in a week or so and then when the lead horse goes back to herd, he will have bonded with the new horse and will protect or at least help keep the herd from being too hard on him.

Walk the new baby by the fence a lot, let the other horse come up and sniff and squeal and even bite him, he will learn to move and show submission, this exposure will help his not be such an outsider when you put him in. You can even feed him near the fence or tie him by the fence and work with him, the more exposure the herd sees him and is allowed to interact, even through a fence, it will be better for him later.

Question: I have a 17 yr old mustang horse and a 3 yr old donkey (owned both for 2 yrs) we just last week got a 20 yr old pony, we would like advice on how to introduce pony into herd? Pony is in their pasture but in barn stall, we have taken the pony out in evenings into a small paddock we put up for him so we can watch interaction through fence with each other. My horse being the boss in the field has sniffed and left for the most part, but today he made 2 (what I call bluff charges) at the paddock where pony is. The donkey stays at paddock smelling and trying to poke his head through fence. The pony doesn't react much at all to any of

this...not even to my horse charging towards the fence (my horse did stop charge right at fence (bluff charge or showing dominance?) Any advice on a safe way to put together and how to go about it. Thank you

Answer: feed the pony so he is not hungry, then put out 5 or 10 piles of hay (half flakes or so each) put these at least 20 to 30 feet apart so your two will have lots to think about, then let the pony in the pasture and you leave and stay out of it. They will work it out.

Anytime you put a new horse in, there is always a chance of a kick, cut, bite or fence crash, but if you put the hay far apart and not close to any fence, the dominant one will chase pony off each pile and there will be enough piles so no one has to defend any food.

they should be fine, don't try and help or save, you will make it worse, just give the herd something to do (check out all the piles of food) and let the pony out that is not hungry and they should work it out.

Horse pucky! Horses don't have to big to be in a herd, think about it, that would be pretty rough in the wild, if this was true all baby horses would be beat up or killed, not real good for species. The people you ask don't know what they are talking about and don't understand herd behavior. If they understood they would know that the head horse does not care since he knows he is lead, he is secure in his position and he knows the little guy is no threat. The two other young ones are fighting for their position and do not want to be last, the new guy will be last in the pecking order and they have to show him that.

I discuss this more on my horsemanship page under herd behavior. Read that and if you have more questions, let me know. You have learned well, no advice should replace your good judgment or your safety. I tend to speak for the horse and that upsets many people. This colt wants to be part of a herd. He is afraid and cannot sleep well and has no friends. He needs to be chased to develop his muscles, he needs to be pushed to learn respect and that he must yield to a higher horse, which will be you later. The herd has to teach him herd manners so you can use that knowledge later to train him. I am not there, very rarely will a horse beat or kill another horse, it can happen, it can happen more with stallions. You are correct in the wild the mother will protect a colt, but, if a stallion wants the horse dead, the mom will be helpless.

We, humans, cause these problems since we buy sell, move horses from herd to herd, put up fences where horses can get hurt. 7 acres is pretty good size. If this colt gets trapped in a corner of a fence (that would not be in the wild) he can get hurt. If he panics and runs blindly in fear, he can run into or through a fence. So he can get hurt. In open land he would just run and the other would get tired of chasing. The chasing horses are just showing dominance and teaching him manners, it is not personal, it is not mean, it is just horses being horse.

You can do a couple of things to ease the situation, but I hesitate telling people to much since they will do what they think they hear or will do it in a vacuum without the hundred considerations and variables that come into play. Every thing you do depends on several if not a hundred different options and variables. Each choice changes with many factors, the horse's reaction, the other horses reactions, your reactions, the environmental changes, the location, etc. Every factor changes what you can do, what you should do, what you should not do, how you should do, how hard to push, how much to release, when to release, when to stop releasing, when to stop, when not to stop and so on and so on. So if I say you need to do X and you do without any consideration for all the other factors then it may not work, it may backfire and get you or the horse hurt, or you may get lucky and nothing bad happens. So when I tell people things, they miss all the other stuff and then get mad at me when I tell them, It is them that causes good or bad, they are the one thing that makes a situation work or fail, people don't want to hear that, it is easier to blame the horse for being stupid, dumb, or crazy.

You can put up some temporary panels in the middle of the pasture and make a round pen or box so the colt can hang in there and get to sniff and get to know the other guys, they can push and have little fights through the fence for a day or so and this will make it easier when you let him out.

You can take out the most aggressive horse and lock him up for a few days and let the colt just hang with the leader and one other horse, then they can accept him and then let the other

out, that way the colt will have time to learn the fences, learn where he can run, learn manners and how to run from the other two and then be better prepared to deal with the most aggressive horse, when you let him back in. (I say aggressive, but I just use that term, this horse is only being a horse and making sure his spot in the pecking order is maintained, especially if he is last, now he is thinking, Yippieeee, now I have someone lower to push around).

Another option is lock up the lower horses, let the little guy bond and get to know the leader and he may take him under his wing and protect him from the other two.

Just use imagination and come of with ways to set the horses up for success. Remember the goal is to get this little guy with another horse so he can feel safe and start growing and learning herd behavior.

I could on and on, but you are there, you need to work it out and don't set the horse (any horse) up to fail, help them find the right answer. It will take time and effort, but if you rush it, try and take short cuts you will make the horse pay for your mistakes.

Well your story is too often heard. You are why the statistics say 80% of all new horse owners get out of horses in the first year. You have set yourself and your horse up for failure. You think since you rode as a kid when you had no fear and did not care so much that you can do the same thing. You can't, you changed and horses know it. You need to learn about horse and stop thinking just because you rode as a kid that you know horses. You don't. Read books, read my web site, I bet you will learn many things that you never knew as a kid. This horse is not dangerous, but it may kill you. That may sound silly but it is true. The horse is only a reflection of you. You do not know what you are doing and the horse knows it so he is taking advantage of you.

I am sure you don't want to hear this, but I am telling you like it is. So either admit you don't know what you are doing and fix it, learn and study or get out of horses before you get hurt and end up getting your horse hurt.

If you understood herd behavior you would know that ALL horses bite each other and that is no reason to keep this horse alone. Put the horse out with other horses, stay out of it and let the horses be horses. They DON'T need you to save them or protect them from each other. Believe me horse need much more protection from people than they do other horses.

If you don't believe me, put your horses together and leave them alone in 5 days or less they will all be buddies and grazing and peacefully being a herd. Try it, if you are about to give up anyway what the hell. After you see that I am right, then maybe you will listen to what I said and finally realize and admit, you do not have a horse problem, you have a you problem, you are causing your horse to do what it is doing, the fact that you do not realize this is part of the problem.

Let the horse be a horse and leave him alone for a week, read and study everything you can get your hands on and then start over.

ANSWER: A buddy is the best answer, and if the only reason you are not doing it is so she won't get attached sounds pretty selfish. She is a horse that needs a buddy to feel safe and secure. She is in the pasture much more time than she is with you and for you short periods with her you want to deprive her of feeling safe and having a friend that understands her. People keep horses alone since it is easier on them. I would never keep my horse alone. So what if she gets attached, deal with it, it will make you better at understanding how to deal with and fix problems and keep her focused on you. It may be more work, but it is best for the horse.

ANSWER: I do not believe in using supplements for behavior problems. I am a firm believer that horse problems, as people call them, are caused by people. Caused by people that don't understand horses. I say so what if she gets attached, because if you understood horses you would know that it does not matter if a horse is attached, when a horse is with a strong leader, it will follow that leader and nothing else matters. You say you do not have the time for another horse, time is the number one problem with all horse owners. To me it is an excuse not to put in the effort and time to learn and understand horses. I have two horses that are connected all the time, some would say they are buddy sour, it does not matter when I take one away they listen to me, since they see me a strong and their leader. Depriving a horse of

a friend is selfish, that is my opinion, why should your horse be destined to a life of being alone because of your lack of time or to prevent you from dealing with a normal instinctive behavior, being part of a herd. Why? For the same reason that most do it, it is easier for YOU.

So as your, I would be thinking, lets see, my owner wants me to listen to her when she decides to come out, but every night I am alone, fearful and without a herd, I spend all most of my time alone and insecure since I do not have a buddy help me stay safe, I don't sleep good and I don't rest good, since I am alone most of time, then when I am not alone, I have this human come out, rush to saddle me, ride me, tell me what to do and then she leaves me alone, by myself most of the time. Why should I like this human, why does she abandon me every night, why does she just spend time with me when she wants ride me and then leaves me and then she expects me to be grateful for some hay and treats.

As for trying to fix what you call problems, what I call normal horse behavior, with supplements, that would be like me telling you if someone is hitting you and abusing you, you should take some vitamin C. This is not about what you feed your horse, this is about you having a relationship and understanding of your so your horse will trust you and see you a fair leader that it can trust. I am sure in your mind that you think you treat your horse good with good food and give it a good home, that is not what a horse wants or needs, a horse wants safety and security, they only get that from other horse or people that understanding and act like other horses. Being nice and feeling good about yourself means absolutely nothing to a horse.

I am pretty sure I could work your horse for about 15 minutes, take it for a ride and it would not do what it does to you. The horse would know I know horses and would see me as a safe and dependable leader and would act totally different with me. As I always say this is not a horse problem, not a supplement problem, not a weather problem, not a traffic problem, not a barn problem..... which leaves People, more specifically you. Fix yourself and your horse will get better. Stop blaming the horse or looking for other solutions, you only have to look in the mirror to find the answer.

Helen, like many people who ask me questions, the last thing they want to hear is they are problem and they want me to tell them how to fix the horse. Anyone reading this and if you read again, I never said you hit or abuse your horse. You hear what you want to hear, you see what you want to see. You are still telling me your horse is stubborn! As I say a lot, people that use negative terms to describe their horse are really describing themselves. So I would from your response that you are stubborn and your horse is only a reflection of you. So you are more than willing to keep coming up with excuses about the poor horse's past, the lack of supplements, your horse is sensitive, your horse is clever and any other reason. You asked for my opinion and I gave it to you, nothing you have said has changed my opinion and if anything it has confirmed it. You see your horse as stubborn, you respond to this by being stubborn and then your prediction is proven. If I think a horse is mean, I treat it mean, it will be mean. If I think a horse is abused, I spoil it and soon it becomes more spoiled and then I use the excuse that it was abused. Horses are reflections of the people handling them. A calm horse is handled by a calm person, a nervous horse is handled by a nervous person, a stubborn horse is handled by a stubborn person.

You want to talk about how you saved this horse from meat, that is great and good, but your horse does not care, does not know it, does not appreciate it, does not owe you for it or anything else. A horse does not care if you feed it, give it treats or keep it warm. People do get that and that is why there so many people blaming horses for problems that they create. Stop looking for the problem, look at yourself, make yourself better and I assure you your horse will get better, it is really that simple.

So disagree with me, disagree with your horse, and keep searching for someone who will tell you what you want to hear and maybe you will FEEL better, but it will not help your horse.

Hobbles:

Hi Sue, hobbles are great tool for teaching many things. In the days where your horse was your only means of transportation, while traveling long distances you would have to sleep where you could, many times there were no trees and no way to secure your horse. Hobbles allowed you to let your horse graze through the night while keeping him close so in the morning your horse would not be several miles away. Some horseman use bells on a rope tied

on their horse to help find them after a night of grazing. By putting a bell on the lead horse, you can find the herd easier in the morning. Hobbles allow a horse to still use his back legs for protection and even to run if needed, but help minimize his speed of travel.

As for hobble being an advance sack out technique, it teaches a horse to trust you not to hurt him. It teaches a horse to learn to deal with being trapped or restricted without panic. A hobble trained horse will fight less if ever trapped in a fence, wire or things that could hurt him. Hobbles, if done right, remove fear and teach a horse confidence.

I explain this in more detail on my web site, read my sacking out section on my horsemanship page.

This sounds like a exception rather than a rule. You sound like you are doing some good things, but they are not working. So looking at this from the horse's point of view, why is not working? You have to be willing to change if you want to see change in your horse. The horse is telling you something, it may be something hurts, I am in pain, I don't understand, I am confused, I don't know what is going to happen.... something is going on and the horse is telling trying to tell you. Are you listening or you so focused on fixing the problem you see that you are missing what the horse is saying. You say the horse does not like to move, you say the horse stands around a lot and does not play, then you say the sweats and gets wild when you make her move, lunge or ride her, so I would look for pain or physical issues and make sure her sweating and reactions are not from pain.

Then I would try and change what I doing, do different things to see if I can get different responses. This horse is not a horse anymore since it has been ruined, reprogrammed and taught bad lessons from bad people. Sometime this can take years to undo, sometime it will never get undone and you will only see small changes.

Now to contradict what I just said, it sounds like you have changed bits, pulleys, gear, hacks, and other things. So maybe you did not stick to something long enough to get her to adjust and accept it.

What seem to work best with horses are calmness, consistency, routine and lack of restraint. Horses that want to run off always do worst when people try and hold or force them to stop. Try and stop trying to force her to walk, or to stop her from running, focus more on redirecting her fear and outburst. She has to learn to look to you for calmness and security. When she goes off on her instinctual reactions, your goal has to be able to pull her back to you. Pull not by force, but by understanding. Not sure how much time you are spending with her, but that is important, the more time you spend with her, not asking or making her do something, the more she will not fear or be concerned with you, which will make it easier for her to look to you when scared or to seek your direction.

Not sure I like you keeping her away from other horse, if she did good with stud, when not in heat I would keep her with him, she obviously still understands horses since, according to you, he has gotten through to her. Neglected and abused horses need recovery time with horses, they need time away from humans that just require things of them. I believe this is the best healing they can have.

You said she likes being ponied and does well, I do as much of that as you can, if you do it enough you can probably pony her with no lead. You can teach her to follow you and stay with you over time. I like to pony out a horse and then let off lead on the way home, most horses will just follow the other horse home and at worst will run home and leave the other horse, if it is safe, let her figure it out and after a while she will just figure out to follow you and you can pony her on all rides. Then you can observe her responses with not human interference, no reins, no pulling, no rider.. this will help confirm that she is not in pain and you can get a better indicator on what the horse is about, let her grow and experience things without being told, forced, pulled, pressured. Over time she will figure it out. The slow way is the fast way. Lots of time, lots of small progress, lots of release on all tries, all of this seems to work best.

When you lunge or round pen her, don't ask for movement, just be with her, let her decide to stand or walk, let her decide to run or trot, you just see how little you can get her to do something other than stand, but standing is OK too. So change what you know, change what has not worked, ask less. When she decides to turn up the heat, disengage from her, not pressure, release of pressure, start walking away, relax and move slowly away, she will be confused and will follow and will likely calm down, since she is expecting you to put pressure

by slowing her, speeding her, stopping her, since she expects this, don't do it, confuse her and make her think, what is going on, why is this happening, this has never happened before, then you move her out of reaction, expectation and get her to think and be curious, then she will be thinking and not reacting.

This sounds like one of the horses you have to think out of the box, she is teaching you. She is going to make you better and make you use different mental tools in your tool box. The old screw driver and pliers will not here, so you have to find the new and right tool for her. I would be she is used to fighting humans, don't fight with her. However with that said, how did the stud get her to listen or respond. If it worked for him, use his technique. Just keep putting yourself in your horses position, but remember horses don't bribe with carrots and treats to get respect, they don't feel sorry for a lower horse.

More turn out time is great and that is one thing that you did that has probably helped more than you know, so keep her out of that stall as much as possible.

hope this helps,

Comment: The hobble is probably the most dangerous and most disrespectful act you can ask a horse to engage in. 9 out of 10 horses will be seriously injured their first time. Think about it...would Monty Roberts or Pat Parelli hobble a horse? I think not. This is my personal opinion. I've owned horses for 25 years and only know one guy who talked about hobbling a horse many, many years ago. If you resort to hobbling a horse, hobble yourself first. Horses are flight animals. Hobbling a horse is abuse!

Answer: You don't understand horses or hobbles, hobbles are better than a bit/tie down/nails in a hoof. A bit causes pain. OMG, horses are flight animals, No shit, If you read my site you might truly understand this concept and not just repeating what you have heard. Anyone/Monty/Pat knows that hobbles are a great way to let your horse roam, eat & relax. The stats you used that 9 out of 10 only shows the 9 idiots that hurt the horse did it wrong. Horses are hurt everyday & some blame the bit, the horse, the saddle, the fence & YOU blame the hobbles, don't preach ignorance using good horseman names to try and impress or give the impression that your lack of knowledge is somehow improved since you use well know horseman's names.

Hoof and Feet:

I am not a farrier but I do my horses feet myself. So I can only give try and answer this but there are farriers here on allexperts and they could give you better and more detailed advice. If you take pictures will look at them and give you good tips.

The long wet season can make feet soft and can cause some mud scald. My thoughts on trimming feet better. It sounds like you may be taking off a little much, but without seeing the hoof it is hard to tell. Sometimes, move hoof comes off with each rasp since the hoof is normally moister and softer so it is easy on a soft hoof verses a horse dry hoof.

Not trimming them for a month or so will not hurt and may give time to grow and heal. I often have a my horse's feet to ensure they look balanced and even and to make sure I am not missing anything. I have a good farrier come out and do a trim after a month or so and see what they say.

I really recommend that you re-ask this question to a farrier expert and get their take. Your horse looks very sad. He had a good friend and now is alone. Horses need another horse to relax and to play and so they can rest and relax. Your horse is nervous and scared and without another horse to spend time with he will get worse. He is also 18 years old so he is set in his ways and if he has had bad handling then it will take longer to work on those. I would not ride this guy until he was better adjusted to his new home and you understand horses more.

Hoof cracks could be bad, but I would have a farrier take a look at next time one is out. I am pretty anti shoe, but a crack that goes all the way to cornet band is not good. This is something that needs to be checked out in person, you can take a couple of pics and send them I will take a look, but depending on how deep is the issue, a minor superficial crack may not be that bad, but if it is deep through the hoof wall, then the hoof strength is definitely compromised. If she is running and being active in pasture, then it can't be that bad, but

remember round penning is very tough on horses since it puts lots of weight on the outside, too much running a round pen does lots of long term damage, I think. I use round pens more for control, pressure and release to teach a horse I can put pressure and release if it the come or follow, it should not be an exercise pen, very unnatural and can do more damage than the extra weight.

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

Horse Behavior:

QUESTION: I'm 52, been around horses much of my life, horse has been out on pasture with one youger gelding. I bought a big quarter horse I would guess he was about 5-6 when I got him. Very disrespectful, I have had him two years. He got better but not completely was treated like a dog not a horse. I'm a big guy 6'6" 250 not used to loosing in these type of contests. He decided he was NOT going ot be shod that last time by the farrier. I have had back problems and can't ride like I used to, can't bend over to work on his feet. No round pen although that may change. All the common disrespect kind of issues. Not standing still while sending this one and I like your responses. I did send him to the Amish to try to get the attitude off him once and for all. I read the opener on one you had recommending not to do this but was unable to read further. Now I have some concerns about having sent him. It's kind of a thing where if I can't get this fixed. He's going to be in a lot of trouble because I don't sell my problems to others and I can't justify keeping him if I can't work with him.

ANSWER: Well lots going on here. It sounds like this horse has been trained well to learn that he is in charge, he is bigger, he is stronger and he gets his way... all bad lessons to teach a horse. So now the horse has become the teacher and he is teaching well. It sounds like he has taught you that you can't win, not true, but if you believe it, then it is so. It you believe you can or believe you can't, you are probably right!

Older Men horse owners tend to be too aggressive, much like most women tend to be too nice and think love will make a horse better. All discipline and no love is just as bad as all love and no discipline. Both confuse the horse.

In my younger days, growing up in Texas, it was all about showing the horse who is boss, and that worked, when you are young, strong and in good health, but later in life, it does not work so well as you are finding out. I hear a lot about this horse, but not too much about you. Being around horses and owning horses does not mean you understand horses. I say this since I was around horses for years and did not have a clue. Natural Horsemanship works, it works better and is easier on horse and human. However, unless you think like a horse, understand a horse's mind, understanding a horse's instincts, understanding that Release teaches, know about feel and timing, know about pressure and release, advance and retreat, knowing about herd behavior, knowing how horses talk and communicate with each other, know what you are saying with your body and actions, all these things make you successful or unsuccessful with horses.

You are still seeing this as a horse problem, I tell you and just about everybody, including myself, whatever a horse does you cause it, you either cause good behavior or bad behavior, to a horse it is just behavior.

Read my horsemanship page, it will make you see there is a lot about a horse you do not know. Once you accept that you are the problem and if you change your horse will change, then you will see progress.

A horse is give and take, if you just take the horse will stop giving, if you just give the horse will take more and more. It has to be a partnership. The Amish do not believe this, they normally believe that pain, meanness, threats and intimidation all bad since they do not understand release, or having a relationship with a horse, they only understand dominance and fear. Maybe not all, but most that I know of.

Work on yourself and your horse will get better. This horse is teaching you, this horse is forcing you to learn, it is not going to let you get away with the old brute force training methods, this horse is going to make you understand horses and learn their language if you

want to Win..... Calm seas never made a good sailor and easy horses never made a good horseman.

As for you not wanting to pass on your problems, you are the problem not the horse, in another hands, this horse could be a gem.. don't make this a horse problem, this horse needs change, either change in you, change to someone else or change in how it is treated.

Horses are masters of change.. they adapt almost too well, whenever something changes they know it and they change and they adapt. You have a great horse here that is trying to force you to be better, don't sell him short or yourself, read, try different things and grow with this horse instead of fighting and allowing him to lead you down the path of failure.

The short answer is, move a horses feet to show him you are higher. Stop him, move him, change his direction, change is speed, make him back up, all of this tells him you are higher and he should not challenge you.

Hope this helps,

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: You are correct sir, an old dog can learn new tricks if the old dog doesn't let old pride interfere. Thank You for your prompt response

Answer: Thank you.. I must say it is refreshing to have someone listen to my suggestions and not take personal and tell me how rude I am to even suggest that it may be their fault.

Horses make us better, they challenge us, they force us to be on our A game or they take over, it is their way. They are always trying to find weakness in their leader since their life depends on it. They are always on their A game or they are dead. Horses are not mean they are direct, they are not ego driven they are staying alive driven. Their entire life is about being a part of a social herd where numbers mean safety and having only the strongest and smartest leader keeps them alive. Success to a horse is not about impressing others, being right or other petty human traits, it is about staying alive. They are the purest form of survival of the fittest. All too often people want to make them better, improve them, or help them..... they do not need our help or improvement, they are pretty perfect as they are... but as humans, with our egos and self importance, we always want to make it their problem... It just ain't so and once people get that, they are on their way to true horsemanship.

Best to both of you,

Question:QUESTION: I acquired an 8 year old Arabian Gelding that has been previously ridden only in arena and paddock or small field settings. He is very "Arabian" in that he is sensitive and reactive but also wonderfully responsive. He is sound, healthy, on daily turnout with 2 other horses and close to many others. He is stalled for 4 to 8 hours each day with pelleted feed and hay. He has had some professional training for the show ring but when I bought him, I was told he wasn't happy in the show ring. I am a trail rider. I have moderate experience riding trail and have done some long distance rides. I cannot get this horse desensitized to the trails. He spooks dangerously at anything that he cannot see. I can lead him and he's fine. Mounted he is dangerous. He rears, spins, bolts and hops. I have had broken bones as a result. He might be fine and confident one day with a quiet horse companion then the next day be frantically nervous. He will cross water one day and the next act like he's never seen the same creek. He is responsive, respectful and confident in an arena setting or in hand. I have gone so very very slow with his trail training but cannot get him accustomed to it. It has been nearly a year. He will, without warning, spook at a sound or site that is something he's seen or heard before without warning and he's very light on his front end. I once enjoyed his challenges, he's a dream to ride and I like animated horses but this feels like he becomes unhinged and there's no way to ground him and reassure him once he is anxious. Any tips beyond the "you need to desensitize him" or "give it time" would be appreciated. I

am surrounded by experienced riders who have not been able to tell me how to handle him. I don't want to give up on him.

[image: Horses-702/2009/07/Bay-Arab.jpg](image:Horses-702/2009/07/Bay-Arab.jpg)

ANSWER: I always look to people for the problem and not the horse. You may be too nice and too easy and he knows it. This is a smart horse, you think he is not learning, I think is learning too well. He knows your weakness and is using them. Sacking out is different than just desensitizing him. Read my sacking out section on my horsemanship page. Show and teach this horse you can create fear and remove it, you can make him nervous and uncomfortable and can make him feel safe, this horse will get his confidence from you, but you must first have it. If he is so good on ground then find things that scare him and stop his fear and put him to work and make his attention go away from fear and back to you.

Time will teach you, a horse knows how to be a horse. My guess is that this horse does not run around the pasture scared all the time when you are not riding him or with him, that is a good sign that you are doing something to cause this or not doing enough to prevent it.

Read my site so you understand horses better and turn up the heat on this horse and show him you are a strong leader that will not allow him to be fearful.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: I've read a number of your articles on your site including the sacking out part. I watched the video. As I said before he does not react in a bad way to stimulus in hand and is calm when being led, tied and handled. It's only under saddle and on the trail that he becomes fearful. I ride other horses, some young and learning and I don't have a problem with them even when they are fearful or spooky. I agree that his is a confidence problem and that he'll get confidence from me but when he becomes unhinged, exactly HOW do I "stop his fear"? When he is experiencing snorting, shaking, head up, heart pounding fear reaction do you think he is "using my weaknesses"? I wish I knew more about all the skeletons in his closet. I think I know that time is my answer, I just hope he doesn't hurt me in the meantime. Thanks for your help, this is a really valuable service!

Answer: You cannot stop his fear, part of the problem is you think you can, you try and you fail. All horses identify weaknesses in people and other horses. He is found many in you. He knows he can get you off, he knows you get scared when he gets scared, he knows you will not correct or discipline him for reacting the way he does to his fear, he knows you do not help him with his fear with strong direction and instead try and talk and calm him. **YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND HORSES.** You think since you can ride other horses with no problems then this must be a horse problem. You want to worry about his skeletons and think that somehow you can fix or make it better by knowing what he has been through. I think you are wrong. **YOU** hope he does not hurt you, he does not care what you hope, he does not care if he hurts you and he does not care that love him and take care of him, he is a horse and that is all he knows how to be. **YOU** can't admit that you are the problem, you can't help this horse since you don't understand horses, you don't want to get hurt, but you don't know how to increase your chances of not getting hurt. You are looking at this from your emotions and not for logic.

This horse does not want to hurt you, he does not want to hurt himself, but he will do both to try and stay alive. You see his fear as a problem, he sees it as a way to stay alive, since you look at

this from a you and human side and he looks at this as a horse and stay alive side, your chances of succeeding are less and your chances of getting you or the horse hurt is more.

Reading a few articles, watching a few videos, riding a few horses, do not teach you about horses. Horses are the best teacher of horses. You don't know it but this horse is making you better, he is making you more aware, he is making you have a better seat, he is building your confidence, he is forcing you to grow and try and learn different ways, but with horses the lessons are dangerous and unforgiving.

Stop thinking the horse has a problem and work on yourself, then your horse will get better. Stop thinking you got have this figured out, you don't, you don't understand horse fear, you don't understand how to remove fear, you don't understand how to teach a horse to respond differently to his fear. I know this since the horse is telling you this. The horse will tell you when you are right and when you are wrong. Problem is most people are too busy being right to listen, they are too busy helping, they are too busy trying to fix the horse.

I work with horses all the time where people tell me how special their horse is, how different their horse is, how what a troubled past their horse has had and each and every time the horse does fine when I work with it. So you would think the people would get that they are the problem and not the horse.....Nope, they end up wanting to give me the horse or tell me what a gift I have, or how I have a special way with horses or their horse must be a Man's horse. None of what is true, I understand horses, I know horses, I listen to horse and I know that a horse is only the reflection of who is handling it and that I cause all things that happen when I handle a horse. If a horse does good, I cause it, if it does bad, gives me the wrong answer, get hurts or confused, I CAUSED IT. Most people never get this and that is why horse traders, trainers and others make lots of money off lots of people.

Work on yourself and your horse will get better.

Question: I'm 52 and a average rider. I've worked on desensitizing. My horse is kept at a ranch stalled next to other horses which she is GREATLY attached to and I hate it! My horse bolts for the "sole" purpose of running back to the hitching rail and not spooking and it is REALLY obvious this is her goal. She dumped me yesterday and I really hurt my back badly. I'm too old to get hurt like this and want to break this bad habit of hers. Desensitizing is a must but when the bolting is for the specific reason to run home what would the training consist of?

Answer: Well, I don't think you are going to like my answer, but I have gotten used to it, so here I go. :) This is not a horse problem. You are looking at this like the horse planned to hurt you or planned to run back or is so smart that it knows what it is doing, all wrong in my book. This horse is being a horse and part of the problem is you don't see this or understand it. This horse telling you, screw off, you are not a good leader, you don't have my respect, you can't stop me, you can't make me not want to do this and the big pay off for the horse is, IT GETS RELEASE! -- I just did an article on release and the link is below.

You see this as the horse has a habit, I see it as you created the habit by not stopping it. You say the horse bolts, I say you let the horse bolt and you do not stop it from bolting. You say you got hurt from her bad habit, I say you got hurt since you did not see it coming, you allowed it to happen and you did not stop it. You say the horse want to get to rail or buddy, I say the knows it can where where he wants, so it does. This is why I always say it is never the horse's fault and most horse problems are people problems.

I assure you, if I got on this horse it would not run back to rail. For the

simple reason that I would not allow it, I would make this horse not want to go to rail, I would make it work and not fun to be at the rail, I would run this horse around the rail 20 times until the horse was begging me to stop, I would know how to flex this horse and disengage his rear end so he could not run where he wanted to, I would make sure this horse knows that I am ready and just waiting for him to run so I could put him to work, I would be prepared and ready to prevent this horse from running, I would make sure this horse knows when I say whoa it mean whoa, I would teach this horse that I am in control and he is not in control, I would know that this horse shows me respect or pays for not showing me respect. Everything a horse does is because of what we do, what we allow, what we fail to prevent or what happens because we are not paying attention and missed the signs.

I call this a good horse. He has payed attention, he has leaned from you well, he has proven to you and him that he is smarter so he is leader, so he is higher and he his in charge. You and I know this is not true, he is not smarter, but you have allowed him to think this and he has convinced you of this, now you believe and that is why you are writing me. You are smarter, you can stop this, you can prevent this, you can change this, which is why this is a people problem and not a horse problem.

Read my horsemanship page on my site it is long, but it will help you understand horses better and maybe help you understand what is going on here.

Rick

I have a 17.2hh TB gelding who is 11yrs old who was normally very quiet but I had a bad accident while jumping one of my old horses and am just trying to get back into riding and over my fear. I have only had darcy for just over a week and have not been able to ride due to weather conditions and the fact he has recently thrown a shoe. I had him cleared of any problems or drugs by a vet and when i rode him pre purchase he was perfect but he is now becoming very aggressive and piggish when i handle him on the ground and it is making me uneasy about riding him. his feed is all cool mixes and low energy as he is not work at the moment what could be causing this change in temperament and what can i do to regain control and respect. I love him very much and he is just so beautiful he is a stunning mover and i want to be able to have a good partnership with my boy.

ANSWER: Fear is a bad thing with horses. Horse's know what is going to happen before it happens. They know if you are worried or fearful, they can read it and they will take advantage of it. This horse was good before since it did not know you, if did not know that you were insecure, it did not know that you were scared to get tough.. Now it does, you have taught it so and now that it knows this, you have to un-teach it. This is near impossible since you caused it in the first place. Loving this horse will not help this horse. Being tough, showing it who is boss, being a strong leader, being clear that this horse MUST respect you or you will take charge and move it feet and show the horse that you are a strong and capable leader. You have not shown this and the horse knows!

Trying to get over fear by trial and error only confuses the and makes it more likely that you will get hurt. You create what you fear with horses. Horses are only a reflection of the person handling them.

Read my site and learn as much about horses since sometime knowledge is power and it will help you with your fear.

Horses keep you honest, you cannot fool a horse into thinking you are a good leader that is not scared or worried, they will read right through it and then not respect you or trust you. I always hear, mostly women, say my horse loves me, he knows I love him..... horse pucky, a horse likes a strong leader, they only respect a higher horse, higher horses are rarely nice, offing treats, head horses and lead horses are direct, they are sure of themselves and they will not hesitate to correct a lower horse if it does not listen. Either learn to be a higher horse is expect this treatment from every

horse you ever have.

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Firstly i live in queensland aus and my fall i had left me in wheel chair for almost 2 years so i think i have every reason to be nervous since it was jumping at a state comp that put me in it. I have owned 12 horses including a beautiful arab stallion and mare who i bred a few times and i also work at a arab stud on weekends and as vet nurse with a major in equine injury during the rest of my time a manage a pet superstore. second Now i paid a great deal of money for this horse because he would be sumthing that i could put effort into and get bk to competing the fact is he is really big and YES i am NERVOUS FROM ALMOST BEING KILLED. It was neither my fault or my horses it was number of things that contributed.AND you have to start over coming the fear and moving on anyway so in your opinion i clearly should not own a horse or ride anymore BUT i can tell you that is not an option I was good at what I did and want to be that good again BUT i know its going to take time. I asked for advise on how i can go about moving past my fear and regain control not for you to tell me " a horse is only as good as it handler" you didn know me or what my situation really was u have not seen me ride so how could u judge me like that. this question and the other are on public view so ther ppl wanting advise know they arn't going to get any here.

Answer: You asked a question and asked for my opinion. Now you don't like the answer and now want to make this about YOU. You used "I" about 15 times in your follow up, you are more worried about how you look and are trying to tell me how much you know and how much you used to do and how good you are and how you want help but obviously not honest help. I don't do this to make YOU feel good or to tell you what you want to hear, you can pay a trainer for that. I understand horses and try and help horses. You are scared, frankly I don't care if you have good reason to be scared or if you are scared for no reason, the fact is you are scared and horses know it. So because of that fear, you change how you act and what you do since you are scared. Horses know what is going to happen before it happens, they don't miss anything, so when they are handled by people who are scared, they know it, and they don't care why, they see it as weakness, they don't respect it, they are smart enough not to trust their life to someone who is weak or scared, so they resist more, they test more, they challenge more, they react more, their fear and flight instinct is more and all this creates a good combination for confusion, fear, lack of trust and lack of respect.

So you keep giving me your resume and telling me and others how good you are. It makes no difference to me or to horses. You are looking for answers to YOUR problems with your horse, I am telling what I believe is the cause and since it hurts your feelings or your ego, you want to make it about me, my answer or something other than YOU.

I am doing you and your horse a favor and you are too concerned about how you look or how you may be seen to look at my opinion objectively.

So feel free to ask someone else for the answer you want to hear. You got my answer. Perhaps you should show your horse your resume and what you have done in the past and that will fix your problems.

Good day!

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

First I would say you need to not call your horse names. Your horse is only a horse and any bad habits or negative behaviors have been taught to him by PEOPLE. If you came off a race track you would not be happy either, handled every day by people that care about you, all they do is take you out of a stall run the crap out of you, put you on a hot walker, put you back in the stall and feed you high rich energy food and then keep you locked up

until they want to run the crap out of you the next day.... not much a life for anyone, especially a horse, so cut him some slack.

You said your self that he does better when left in pasture with his buddies. Of course he does, horses hate stalls, they hate being locked up, and they have lots of energy that needs to be let off and they can't do it in a stall. That will fix most of this.

The other thing is he is biting and pinning and kicking all are dominance issues that should not be allowed. You have to impress this horse that you are a leader and you will not allow that. You do that by first not locking him up, then being a good leader, spending time with him not working him, take him for walks and grazing, and if he shows any disrespect you have to let him know that you can move his feet, back him up, make him move, disengage his hips and other things that make him submit and tells him you are boss and he does not do those things.

ANSWER: It may be teeth, but I don't think so. I think this horse like most horses do not like barrel racing. Running barrels is hard on a horse, they normally get kicked to go faster, they get their mouth yanked on to make them turn faster and they learn very quick to associate barrels with pain and work. When people say My horse loves, that normally means they love it and then want to see their horse love it. I have never met a horse that loved barrel racing. What they love is to do as fast as they can so the rider will get off and leave them alone.

It sounds more like she is sour to racing, like a lot of barrel racing horses do. This is not uncommon and pretty predictable. I can assure you when you barrel race you are not working of soft contact, you are not working on good communication with your horse, you are not taking things slowly and working with your horse and considering what your horse is feeling or what your horse is going through. You are worried about getting a good time, finishing fast and looking good... none of that means anything to your horse.

That is my take,

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: I know my horse likes barrel racing. I have a personal trainer who says my mare does like barrel racing. Her ears are pricked and he says her eyes are happy when she runs. I don't yank her around the barrel, I have a video and I can prove it. She is not in pain. I take care of my horse perfectly. I am not worried about looking good. And my mare is just getting trained. I am not worried about speed right now, so thats not the problem. She is not sour, cause I only barrel race her 3 times a week at the walk and jog! My horse comes running to me when I go outside, until recently, and that was why I messaged you, to see what was wrong. I think you are wrong about barrel racing, lots of horses love it. And I can assure you, I am working on a soft contact, and I am going slowly and have good communication. And of course I consider what my horse is feeling and going through. I don't know if you meant to or not, but you imsluted me, barrel riders, their horses, and this sport with your message.

Answer: If you want to feel insulted, I can not help that. You asked my opinion and from what you told me I gave my best guess. I may be wrong. It my answer does not apply to you then fine, ignore it. It amazes me when people ask my opinion and as soon as I even slightly suggest that it may be them causing the problem, then all of a sudden they want to tell me how wrong I am. It does not matter to me what you think, the fact is your horse is giving signals when around the barrels so if it is not what I said, then you need to figure out what it is. Perhaps your trainer, who probably gets paid to tell you things that make you feel good and that won't upset you. I can tell from your response that you would not pay me since you don't want to be told you may be the problem. So if I wanted to get paid by you, and did not care about anything else, then I would tell you what you wanted to hear so you would keep paying me.

By the way, if you have a trainer and you obviously like and agree with this trainer since you want to quote him, why are asking me this question when a trainer, who knows and sees the horse SHOULD be much more qualified to answer this?

In order not to get an email back from you telling how wrong I am, I will give you an answer that you like better.

It sounds like you have done a really good job with this horse, since it loves it's barrels so much it can't be that, so from what you told me it, it may be medical, I would suggest you check with you vet and have a complete check up to rule out medical problems. Once you do that find a qualified trainer so the horse can be evaluated in person. Thanks so much for your question, I hope it works out for you and your horse.

Question: I am 35 yrs old with very little experience with horses however my friend has experience with them and is teaching me how to train my horse which is 3 yrs old. I keep her at my friends place and she brought home 2 Morgans mid winter this year...until then my horse had been by herself...now she is what my friend calls herd bound...she cannot bear to be away from the 2 which do not like her at all...she lost her baby at 5 months due to the gelding kicking her. so we have to keep them separated now since they tried to run her through the barbed fence...inside the small barn they are kept tied in straight stall fashion (we are working on getting the bigger barn built which will have separate stalls) opk the problems are - herd bound how do we fix this?, acts up and strikes out when my friend goes to take her out of the barn after the other 2 were let out...from what we can tell she was led around with kids on her back ...she leads ok but when you get in the saddle and try to get her to step out she "explodes" according to my friend...I have yet to see it happen though so I am not sure....I have seen the others and when I have handled her also she has acted up occasionally but I noticed not as much as when my friend is around....I understand that she is young and will try to get away with things but we have to get her over the herd bound thing and striking out to get her own way...that can be dangerous...I don't want her spirit broke but at the same time I need a horse that isn't dangerous....I have worked with her myself and haven't had much of a problem, every chance I get I work with her so I don't think I am the problem because she responds to me and I don't use whips and such....please let me know what you think ...I would appreciate it greatly.

Answer: All horses are dangerous and are more dangerous with people that know know what they are doing. All horses are herd bound, it is how they stay alive. If you understood horses you would know a horse cannot relax, feel safe or relax when alone and not with other horses.

Your problems with this horse is not the horse, you need to educate yourself on horses, learn all you can so you understand them. One thing is true in the horse world, everyone that owns horses thinks they know horses, the reality is buy a horse is easy, hell you don't even need a license. Anyone can own a horse for their entire life, it does not mean they know or understand horses.

Read my web site, it will help you see horses differently.

ANSWER: Of course she is fixable. She is not broke, she is just a horse. All horse bite and all get bit, that is how they show dominance and try and move up in the herd. You took her out, stopper her from eating, she did not know you much less respect you, so she told you so the only way she know how. You continued to make this about the horse, you say you couldn't catch her, I say you did not know how to catch her and now you have learned how to catch her. You say she is difficult, she is just a horse looking for answers. You say the training techniques that you learn at clinics don't seem to apply to her. MAYBE, you are not doing the techniques rights, maybe your timing is off, maybe your feel is not developed, maybe you don't have the experience of working with 100's or 1000's of horses that the people that taught the clinics did. I worked with lots of people and horses and 99% of the time it is the person causing the

problems. They read books, watch dvds, go to clinics and then never work with tough or difficult horses. They always seek and want the easy horses, the ones that listen and require less work, so they never really understand a horse, they never work through the problems and just quit or move on or sell the horse and mostly just blame the for being stubborn, stupid, crazy or some other name. I have encountered lots of horses that nothing seems to work but I have to keep trying, I have to try and see what I doing wrong, if what I am doing is not working then I am doing it wrong. A good horseperson will always look to what they are doing and never blame the horse. You don't know it, but his horse is being a great teacher, she is not going to work for just anyone, she is not going to allow just anyone to follow, she is going to make sure you really want it, you are really dedicated and will not give up on her. She is where she is since many people have quit on her, blamed her, and make it all her fault. So she has learned well from all the people that left her.

ANSWER: OK Carol, this horse's behavior is caused by you. Until you accept this as fact you can not fix it. If you think it is the horse, the new area, the age, the prior handling, the breed, the long walk, then YOU cannot fix this. You have to acknowledge that you are causing this since you are not stopping or preventing it. This horse is convinced that you can't control her, you don't trust her, you are not secure or safe when you are with her. She knows this and I know this, so until you accept this, her behavior will continue.

You can go about this in different ways, many would tell you to "show her who is boss", but what does that mean. To and the horse is means she has to see you as smarter and as her leader, she does not see as that now, since you are not smarter, you have told her so by letting her do all this. She is not being mean or bad, she is being a horse and acting like a horse without a leader. Of course she is excited to get out to pasture, you would be too if you were locked up all night. So, you need to understand this and try and get her to pay more attention to you, to see you as her leader and that you will not allow her to do these things that could hurt you. If you are so convinced that she wants to go to pasture, then walk her out of barn and let her go. She will run to pasture gate and wait for you, problem solved. No fighting, not frustration and you and the horse prefer it. Now lots of people are too afraid to do this, think the horse will run off and leave, or will get hurt or they will never be able to catch the horse again. All not true, but most people will not listen, will not believe and will not try it. So that is one fix. Another fix is carry some carrots and feed her small pieces on the way to the barn, that will help keep her attention on you and she will not be so focused on the gate. You can probably do this with the horse off lead and free, she will follow you and want to walk with you since you have carrots. Another way is to beat the horse, correct it, hit it back it up, whip it and make it scared of you so it will not pull. All are options, but the best way for you and the horse is for you to work on yourself.

You need to control this horse with your brain and not your muscle, you need to stay calm and in control, you need to push this horse back when she pushes, when she rears, you need to go after her butt and make her disengage her hips and face you, when she passes you, you need to back her up and stop her, when she tries to run off to the gate, you need to make her face you and walk her backwards, make her back up to the gate. She will get good at her back up and she can't go as fast. All of this will tell and show this horse that you are in charge, you control her feet, you are higher in the herd, she needs to pay attention to you and not the gate or pasture. This horse will you a better horse person. She is reading you right, she knows you don't know, she knows you are not stopping her, she knows she can do what she is doing, YOU let her.

This is an easy fix, but YOU have accept that you are the problem and not the horse.

Hi Tricia, this is odd. I would not sell the horse, if anything give him away to a great home, but not yet. This horse may be very connected to you and see's these others as competition to his herd of you and him. Regardless of

the reason, he should not be doing this. You said you have not been spending much time as you did, horses know this and get sour for being abandoned and left on his own. I would guess these other people do not spend time with the horse either so he has no reason to accept them other than his respect for you. If you are really seen as the leader, then he should not do this if you correct him or tell him to stop, however, if you two are pretty equal and he thinks you are not the clear leader, then he will want to protect you and keep you for him, that tells me he sees you as his herd and not as you being the leader.

There are lots of fixes, keep the others away from him or tell them to deal with him like you, they don't want a relationship with him or don't want to take the time with the horse, so don't blame him for being bad. As for the farrier and vet, that could be from past experiences or from you not being a clear leader.

People tend to see the problem different than it is when it comes to horses. This is not a horse problem, it is a you problem or a vet problem or farrier problem, this horse is only being a horse and will do what it has to do, if no one is giving it clear direction on what is accepted, then you can't blame him for doing it no more than you can blame a child for running into traffic if no one has never taught the child that traffic is dangerous.

Ignore her resistance. Make her move, stay focused on what you want, move her feet, and don't get distracted by her test (tail, squeal, threats) any threats to kick, bite or strike, needs to be corrected with harsh discipline. That is a no no and she needs to know it hard and fast. A minor kick out and buck is not bad, but if she tries to kick or spins her butt and backs to you, hit her with a rope, stick or anything you can on the butt "as hard as you can", do not be easy, do not be soft, it needs to scare the S*#*# out of her and she will not do it again.

Read my horsemanship page it will help you understand horses better to see what this horse is doing, she is just testing you to see if she can bully you into not making her work, she is trying to see if you are really the leader and really strong enough to be her leader, if you pass the test and don't back down, then she will stop testing, if you are unsure and don't continue to make her listen then she will see you as weak and will continue to test you.

First, you need to be with your horse more during this time so you can see it for your self. If my horse is "going crazy" I would be there to see it. You call it tantrums, maybe your horse is scared, maybe she is going night blindness, maybe someone is doing something to cause this, maybe she is in pain from an internal issue. What ever it is, if it was my horse I would be there.

As for a possible cause, dusk is the worst time for a horse. Their eyes can take up to 30 mins for them to adjust to night or darkness. That is why horse have so much problems with dark or low light trailers, they can't see and it all appears pitch black. So my first guess would be that your horse may be going blink, having eye sight issues or something else related to the low light of dusk.

Be there for your horse, call a vet, confirm what is going on and help your horse. Wondering, guessing and waiting does not help your horse.

Since the problem just started either you caused it or others are lying to you and not telling you problem. Since I cannot see you ride and did not see the ridden before you, there is no way for me to know. Circling a horse is always the best response and most times will only agitate and make the horse more nervous. People who circle a horse are normally nervous, insecure and don't know any better. It will slow a horse, it will help a horse from running away, but is not a real training method, it is a stall or pause so you can get the horse to come back to you. The horse has to learn that doing this is more work than not doing it, so he will not want to do it. This behavior is either fear based or lack of respect based. You need to determine this in order to know how to address it. Fear based can not be

handled with more pressure. See my sacking out section on my site.

Ground work and making the horse respect you may or may not help your daughter. I would lean more to will not help enough. If horses are handled more by good leaders and by people that understand horses, then they become less resistance to all people. However, if they are handled more by kids, not strong leaders or people that don't understand horses, then they tend to not respect all people and will test and push people more.

I get questions from parents a lot and I tell them mostly the same, since you are asked the question and you are doing research and you are trying to improve your knowledge, that means nothing to the horse when the child is handling her.

So anytime you can get a horse more in tune to respect you, then he MAY be less likely to test your daughter. But, since he already knows your daughter is weak (to her) I think she will continue to disrespect her and push her.

I am reluctant to tell parents to make their kid learn. Horses are something that should be fun, when medals, awards, ribbons and speed or time is involved, the horse and child loses.

You can make your daughter read books about horses, try and educate her about horses. You can make up some test to give her from what you have learned. I see too many kids being mean to horses because their parents told me to "show the horse who is boss". The horse knows she is stronger and can push your D around. You can only change this if you handle the horse more, are with your daughter all the time (hard to do) so you can correct the horse if is disrespectful to your daughter. Older horses will protect and keep higher horses away from the weak or younger horses in a herd, but they are there all the time so it works.

I have seen kids that get it, they understand horses without being mean, they simply push and move the horse every time the horse pushes them, but they are consistent and do it all the time so the horse stops testing and stops pushing so much. Consistency with kids is not always easy, they get distracted easy, they just want to relax, have fun and not be so worried, like adults.

I would have your D read books while sitting with the horse, spend time with the horse, the more time she spends with the horse, since this horse is the lead mare, she may take her under her wing and see her as her herd and not want to push her so much, the flip side to this is the horse will expect your D to listen to her so she may correct her like another horses, with a bite or kick.

This can be a dangerous situation, since your D knows this horse will kick she needs to be away and make sure she always has an escape and distance from the horse. If she acts too scared the horse will see this as weakness and will exploit it. Any time the horse shows any signs of ear pinning, kicks, or bites with you there, you need to make this horse think it just committed suicide, any disrespect to your child needs to be addressed immediately, not 5 mins later or not after your child leaves, tells you and then you go out and give it a lesson, if you can't correct it within 3 seconds, it is too late and will not train the horse and will only make the horse fear you and people and may make the horse more aggressive towards people.

So your situation is not unique, but there is not an easy answer either. Read my site and try to really understand horses better and then see if you can come up with ways pass this on to your D, have her do exercises with the horse, in order to teach her, you must first know the subject.

Don't blame the horse for anything, it is only being a horse, it lives in your world and is trying to figure out the rules and when it doubt it will do what horses do. In your photo I think I see that you are using a leverage bit. This is painful and hurts the horse, it will not teach respect and will teach the horse pain and more resistance. If your daughter can't ride this horse in a

halter, then she should not be riding it. No spurs and no leverage bits for kids, it only pisses the horse off and gets kids hurt.

So hope this helps,

First I would say you need to not call your horse names. Your horse is only a horse and any bad habits or negative behaviors have been taught to him by PEOPLE. If you came off a race track you would not be happy either, handled every day by people that care about you, all they do is take you out of a stall run the crap out of you, put you on a hot walker, put you back in the stall and feed you high rich energy food and then keep you locked up until they want to run the crap out of you the next day.... not much a life for anyone, especially a horse, so cut him some slack.

You said your self that he does better when left in pasture with his buddies. Of course he does, horses hate stalls, they hate being locked up, and they have lots of energy that needs to be let off and they can't do it in a stall. That will fix most of this.

The other thing is he is biting and pinning and kicking all are dominance issues that should not be allowed. You have to impress this horse that you are a leader and you will not allow that. You do that by first not locking him up, then being a good leader, spending time with him not working him, take him for walks and grazing, and if he shows any disrespect you have to let him know that you can move his feet, back him up, make him move, disengage his hips and other things that make him submit and tells him you are boss and he does not do those things.

Read my horsemanship page on my site it will give you a better idea on where this horse is coming from.

ANSWER: Since you have owned the horse for the 17 years, you have to try and figure out what is casing this. It could be something you are doing or some type of pain the horse is feeling. Something changed to cause this new behavior. Without more information, I can't really help. How much handling does the horse get, do you only feed and groom or is the horse worked or ridden, when does this happen, is it consistent, what else is happening around the horse when this happens, when does it stop, is the other horse around, is just doing this to you or others, does it stop doing this when you do something, is there always food present or involved, is there treats involved, does this happen in the same location all the time, what do you do when this happens, what do others do when this happens, how long as this been going on..... as you can tell there more questions than answers, so trying to give you an answer on this without more info is not going to be helpful.

No I did not misread or skip the part, lots of people say they know it is there fault. Saying this is not the same are really understanding Why it is your fault, not understanding this horse is just doing what you are allowing it to do. Being mean is relative. I will attack a horse that charges me, tries to strike or kick me, that is not mean, that is being aggressively assertive, so there is not confusion that these actions bring immediately and negative responses from me. That is not being mean or mad, it is teaching the horse not to do things that can hurt me. It also makes the horse better, gives him boundaries and keeps him clear that he is lower and I am higher, he is not being mean when he kicks at me, I have let him down for not showing him that he cannot do that, showing him that is unacceptable and showing him that lower horses (him) do not kick higher horses (me) or they are moved and attacked, just like any other higher horse would do. So being mean (to me) is more when someone tries to be nice to a horse, tries not to hurt the horse, tries to talk human to the horse and then sets the horse up for failure, sets the horse up to hurt someone and then the horse gets put to sleep for being a mean or dangerous. That is mean to me. So don't set this horse up, knowing it is your fault is only part of the solution, the other part is taking the right corrective action or taking the right proactive/preventative action to stop the bad behavior from ever happening. If you keep this horse focused on you, make it circle you, make it back up a few steps, stop if every few steps, make it walk and then stop, make it walk backwards, stop and pet and rub it, all of this keeps the horse focused on you and not the gate or pasture. This shows the horse you control the feet and you control the horse's movement, so you are higher. It does not have to be done mean or aggressive, just consistent and clear.

Good luck, tell the horse thanks for letting you know that you have not been a good leader and that you were not clear on your position and the horse's position. :)

Give the old girl a hug for me. :)

Hi Becky, training a horse is like building a house. Can you imagine emailing me and asking, I am building a house can you tell how to do it. This is a really broad question. There are about a 1000 things that can get you hurt and another 1000 that may get you hurt and another 1000 that might get you hurt a little bit. The point I am making is training a horse involves a whole lot, so you need to try and educate yourself as best you can. I could tell you what to do, but I can't explain timing, I can't explain feel, I can't tell how to read every horse. I make my web site to help people understand horse horses and to help horses get a better deal. My advice is to read my web site completely, you can skip the cowboy weather, but read it from start to finish, I touch on lots of things that get people in trouble and get horse and people hurt. At least with this little knowledge it will help you, but by no means will it make you a expert trainer. Remember these things:

The horse is best teacher of the horse. Listen
It is never the horse's fault. You cause good and bad, YOU.
The slow way is the fast way with horses. Don't rush or try fast
Never get mean or mad. Be assertive, firm and fair
Learn to speak horse. Herd behavior is key to working with horses

Actually, from your email, you seem to blame the horse for pulling you and ending up on the ground. Had you not hung on to the rope or not been in his way, the horse would not have knocked you down. You, like most horse problems, are really the problem (people problems). This horse is running and scared since he does not trust you and feel that you can keep him safe and he thinks you don't know what you are doing. He may be right since you are ending up on the ground. This horse needs a strong leader, and it he does not see you as that person he will run you down and be scared with you.

ANSWER: Like most people that don't understand horses, they always look to the horse for the problem. I know that it is never the horse's fault. I would say it is you daughters issue or others if others ride or handle the pony. All ponies tend to get bad reputations, they are bought and sold, they are owned by people that think they are a cute pet and know little about horses, then after the newness wears off, they are sold and they cycle starts over, I have never known a pony that did not have at least 3 or 4 previous owners. It is a bad cycle for a horse and they get bitter and resentful and then to start biting, kicking and rearing. This is from years of abuse and neglect by people that don't understand horses. Oats probably have nothing to do with this, lack of exercise, lack of proper handling, lack of consistent handling, rough and inexperienced riders and hands are more likely the cause of these problems and it will get worse.

The following question was rather long, but it has some good points that some of you may get from it.

I have had for horses for around 13 years and have our 2 girls in OJRA (Ohio Junior Rodeo Assoc.)they run barrels, poles, dummy rope and the oldest breakaways and goat ties. My wife also runs NBHA and I am an inspired team roper in the OTR (Ohio team roper) most are #8 or # 12 ropers. I currently use other members horses to rope as I try to finish out a QH to rope on. I put the training on hold and purchased a finished head/heal that Chuck Holloway use to pasture rope on, and did pickup on. The horse once owned by Walt Woodward I was told at one time as well or at least hauled by him. I have done all research on the horse and talked with Chuck and the breeder of the horse numerous times before purchasing.

Horse-9 year old QH gelding (ranch/cow bred out of Eagle Butte, SD) 15.1 1250# very thick, big boned. He is stalled next to a 6 year old QH mare, and kept with 3 other QH's (5 total horses). They do get turn out about every other day.

My experience--team and calf roper (only for 2 years), ranch work (cutting, penning, pasture roping 5 years) starting yearlings on the ground and in the saddle for numerous years.

Problem-horse was abused by high school girl and trainer before I purchased him and now you can't mount him safely.

I really do not have details what they did to him, but am trying to find that out. I have only owned the horse for 3 days (picked him up on Saturday 1/17/2009), but he has settled in nicely and has bonded with our kids bay QH barrel mare. We are very slow with our training and believe you get a better horse in the end if you take your time. We make sure the bond is established first with the horse and that they understand we are the leader and protector.

On to the issues with him:

A. abused-we are trying to gain his trust and show him we are not going to beat, harm or neglect him in anyway. He is coming around and trusts us on the ground, but not when it comes to mounting. I was able to mount and ride him just fine on the day I picked him up (Saturday). I was also able to mount him in our barn and sit on him with no issues (Sunday night). Monday I took him over to the indoor while we roped and he was eager to haze, but would not let you mount. He dances around, and backs up violently. This all stems from the high school girl and the trainer obviously abusing him (for 3 months). I know this because he was not like this according to the owners before he left for the 3 month lease. So the problem I am facing is this is all fresh in his mind still and he thinks we are going to do they same thing they did. Last night (Tuesday) he finally let us get 1 leg up while his head was disengaged but upon trying to step down he went into a violent buck, with his head still disengaged. I was quick enough to get down before he tossed me but when my wife tried she hit the ground. We have giving Dusty (the horse) one on one time and worked with him together. I can see in his eyes the one on one he prefers and does not feel that much pressure versus two of us. So we are going to continue the one on one. I also realize 3 days is not enough time to fully gain his trust and respect, but he sees and understands us as his leader. His join up is excellent, he will lunge and listen perfectly. I am going to go back to the round pen with him and see if that makes a difference but the Ex-owners said it won't. I really do not want to hobble a 9 year old horse that already has trust issues if you know what I mean. We have done everything we have known to do in the past that has worked, but looking for other ideas. One more thing it is funny because he will let you mount the right side but not the left. I have no problem mounting from that side to confuse him for a while but would really like to mount the left. I have disengaged the head fully to the withers both climbing up and down but he still seems to have enough power to get us off. I am going to give him more time obviously and maybe even revisit foundation training steps and rebuild if I have to. This horse has a tremendous handle once you get on him (roll backs, slides, side pass etc.) Any ideas will help.

It also just dawned on me this has been a tie down horse almost all his life. And I should try to mount and dismount the right side. I will try that tonight but any other ideas I can use.

ANSWER: Well, not sure what caused this, but it does not really matter, he cannot do this and has to be shown that doing this gets him work and movement.

On the hobble issues, all horses should be hobble trained and it is never too old to do it, if you do it right and set the horse up for success. I have a hobble page and I would this anyway, not to deal with blow up issue.

As for this behavior when mounting, I would be a little more aggressive on this issue. If he respects a lead rope and someone on the ground, one thing would be have someone on ground hold him and have someone mount and dismount while he knows he is being handled and held by person on ground. Do this in round pen or with long rope secured in case he breaks free.

Get a nightlatch/bucking strap (on my horsemanship page) put on your saddle to help stay in the saddle.

Another thing is make sure he ties well and tie him and get on and off him bare back no saddle and don't stay on long, get on and slide off, lots of release for not moving, tie him short about a foot of rope so he can't move too much. After some bareback mounts and dismounts, put the saddle on and do the same thing, set the horse up so he knows what to expect, after a few of success with this, put him in round pen and do the same thing, mount and dismounts, no riding, then start slow.

If you can't get his head around to stop bucking you might try a war-bridle to help with leverage, but be careful this can hurt if you are hard, so just use it for leverage.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Thanks for all the advice but the only thing I have not tried is the bucking strap, and the war bridle.

On the aggressive mounting I tried numerous times to flex him and just mount, but that scares him even more. You have to be slow for him even to consider letting you up on the left side. He is the type that he must trust you completely. I have tried the bareback already sorry for not sharing this, and get the same result as well as tying him. He gets so nervous he breaks the clip off the lead rope.

I am going to try the right side tonight and see what happens. If you think about it which I did not (after 2 years of calf roping) he is a finished calf roping horse and 95% of the time you dismount to tie the calf on the right side of the horse if you are right handed and also mount back on that side. I am not saying this is the answer but the trainer in PA said the high school girl brought the horse to him because she could not mount the horse. And he described his training to me and it's sounds rough, not natural horsemanship by any means. He is old school and sounds like he beats them.

Once I am able to mount the left side if ever I do plan on doing the old pressure, release trick. To many people around him scares him even worse, he is a one on one horse, but my wife has tried to hold him while I mount and we get the same result. He does respect a lead and person on the ground but as soon as you go to the left side (past his shoulder) of him that all changes. I plan on playing the old pressure release game with him as well regarding approaching the left side. I will approach him on the left and keep approaching him until he stops moving and go one step at a time. He knows what we are doing and knows what to expect when we approach that side. We have tried just lifting the stirup, touching his belly etc. when he does let us approach from the left to let him know we are not just approaching from that side to mount.

Once you are and walk off with him he is fine and has one of the best handles I have ever witnessed. He is very light and if you can ride, you do not even need to cue him (rein, foot etc.) He will totally move off your body position in the saddle. If you sit back hard and continue to do so he will move into the trot, lope etc. If you look and lean (or shift your weight) to the right he goes right.

I did work him hard last night after he tossed me on the lunge line, and even attempted to get back up after but got the same result.

ANSWER: He is your horse so it is up to you on what you want to accept. He may not like the left side, but bucking, throwing and doing dangerous behavior is not acceptable to me. However, if he is gold everywhere else, what is wrong with mounting on the right side, who cares. If you are OK with that, then I would just mount on right side and over time he will bond and then maybe work of left side.

I find it hard to believe that a horse that is doing all this is good on everything else. Most problems appear to be symptoms of lack of respect, fear or confusion.

As for the horse breaking the snap, that is why I have an entire page on Rope Halters and tell people to get rid of snaps. You put this horse in a good rope halter with a good rope and NO snap and he will not break free and will learn to accept this. Every time you try something and fail you teach the horse to win and to resist. You have done way too much already and have not set the horse up so he can only find one right answer. You used a snap and allowed him to break it, so you taught him to pull and fight and then he can get free. You have got and your wife has been tossed off so now you taught him that if he bucks he gets release and gets you off, so now he thinks that is the right answer. You had your wife hold him on a lunge line and he got away, so now he does not respect a lunge line. My point is stop trying things that you cannot win and stop teaching the horse that resistance is the right answer. You need to look at this from your horse's point of view. He gets sent to someone who hurts him, he has been mounted on the right side his entire life and now you have him and before you establish enough trust, respect or whatever it will take to deal with this, you try a bunch of things that set the horse up to fail (find the wrong answer).

You said you plan on doing the old pressure and release trick??? It is not a trick, it is the main thing a horse understands and you have already done the "trick" several times and now the horse knows that you don't know. Your horse is confused, scared or disrespectful and is looking for help and the right answer, so far you have taught him to pull when tied and you get away, buck when mounted and you get the rider off, pull when someone "tries" to hold you and you will get away. This is common mistake, you are ALWAYS teaching a horse, even if

you don't know it. If you are going to deal with a problem you have to set the horse up for success, that means knowing the outcome and making sure the outcome will be positive, if you just try things and then it goes bad you teach the horse bad and make the problem worse.

Every time you email me you tell me you something else and it did not work. Sorry, but it did not not work because you did it wrong or you did not prepare the horse properly or you went too fast or you were not consistent or you used poor equipment or you did not understand what could happen and did not prepare for it. It is never the horses fault! And I know you are not blaming the horse, but knowing it is not his fault and then setting him up to fail is just as bad and blaming him. You have to approach horse training in a mind set of the horse, not from being nice, not for feeling sorry for past treatment, not from let me try this and see if it works, all of this sets the horse up for failure, then the horse gets worse, then it has to be dealt with harsher by the next person and then the horse suffers and has to pay for all yours (and others) good intentions. Intentions means nothing to a horse. A horse always pays for our mistakes.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: OK this will be how I sum this up from what I am reading you are saying. I have done everything wrong, but upon talking to Montie Roberts training camp last night he said we are doing everything right and it is completely a horse trusting us issue. He has learned and did all this previous to us owning him and we have not taught him any of this, nor have we done the right things to fix it as to date. That is why I was asking your advice what is the right thing to do, and you have only told me what I have been doing is wrong. You can't put a rope halter on the horse he knows the difference and rears when he feels the pressure of it. This was demonstrated to me when I picked him up. I am not calling myself a certified trainer by any means, but have broke yearlings, trained roping horses etc. Everything I have learned from Clinton Anderson who only lived 1 hour from me here in ohio, has not worked with this horse and I am seeking advise on what would be the right things to do. All you say is set the horse up for success, but don't state in this particular case how to do that (besides the bucking strap, war bridle etc.). Please be specific and tell me what to do or try next. I borrowed a bucking strap last night and that did not work he still ran off when trying to mount. He is completely terrified of us and everyone else for that matter. Do you think it is just a time issue for him to trust us??

Answer: It could be a trust issue? It could be numerous things and there is no way for me to tell. Monty is a great horseman, Clinton is a great horseman, I am sure both would tell you something different and they both could be right or could be wrong. You, Monty, Clinton and me have varied and difference experiences, we all have our own beliefs. Each of us could take this horse and get different results, some good, some better, and maybe some bad, horsemanship is not about right or wrong, if it does not work, I think it was done wrong, it does not mean that you are bad, dumb, stupid or whatever name you want to put on it, it simple means the horse is telling you whatever you are doing is not working. As a horseman you need to recognize this and try and figure out what will help the horse find the right answer (the right answer is what you want) right and wrong is nothing to a horse, they react to save their life and have no concept of right or wrong, they are just a horse, we want to teach them what we think right and wrong is. A person that wants a horse rear thinks his horse is right to rear, another person who does not want their horse to rear thinks this is wrong. The only does what it thinks it has to do, the horse looks for the easy way, the safe way, the way his instincts tell him to survive.

You still want to make this about You did nothing wrong and you did not teach this horse anything. This is just talk and you see it your way, I see it mine. If you use a buckle and tie a horse and then do something that scares that you know scares the horse and you expect the horse to pull, and then the horse pulls and breaks the snap that you used, then I say you just taught the horse to pull and get release, you just taught the horse that he is stronger than where you tie him, you just taught the horse that when scared and if you pull you can get free (release). You send this to Clint, Monty, Parelli, Lyons or anyone other experienced horseman and I bet you \$1,000 they will all agree. You, like most of us humans, want this to be about ego, knowledge, experience, right, wrong, it's not me, it has to be the horse or something else. I am not saying you intended to teach the horse to pull, I am not saying that you don't know anything about horses since you did this, I am only saying the end result of your actions taught this horse to continue his bad habit of pulling, you did not help the horse, you did not teach the horse that pulling is wrong answer and gets you nothing.

Please don't make this about me, you, Monty, right or wrong. I am telling what I see from what you have told me and what the horse has told you.

As for the horse not wanting or taking the pressure of a rope halter, I have to disagree. I bet you a plane ticket and expenses that I can put a rope halter on this horse, tie this horse and mount this horse on the left, within a few hours at the most within a day. Does that help you, NO. I am confident that I could do this, and if you were close I would be happy to swing by and do it, but it would still not help you. I do things to horses all the time that others say, can't be done. There are exceptions and maybe this horse is one, but from my experience, it is not the horse.

Your comment that the bucking strap did not work, he still ran off. A bucking strap will not stop him from running off, it is designed to help you from falling off or being thrown, so when he runs off he does not learn to get release (you falling off). You want specifics like many people do, I could write a book with a 1000 pages and would not even begin to cover what little I know about horses. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the most knowledgeable person in the world on horses, I would say I am maybe a four. Many people think they are a nine. It is all relative. 15 years ago I may said I was a seven. The more I learn the more I realize how little I know. Talk to any life long horseman and they will tell you every horse teaches you something new, it does not matter if you worked 1000 or 20,000, each horse is different, so when someone wants a answer to a question, you cannot just say do this and it will work. Too many variables.

I can say that I will show someone how to do something, I will do what I tell them, it will work and they will do it and say they did the same thing and it does not work. Then I do it again and it works and then they do and it does not work. They will still blame the horse. So for you to expect me to tell you over email how to fix a problem with a horse that I have never seen, never seen you work, never seen and then tell me about Clinton and living next door to someone or a training camp telling you that you are doing everything right, IT IS NOT WORKING. So you tell me, if you are doing everything right, why is not working?

It is very hard to read emails without hearing a voice or seeing body or facial language, I get it all the time that I seem rude, but I try to stick to what I know in the shortest I can. Tough horses teach us more. The ones that stump us makes us better, it makes use our head to think outside the box, they force us to grow and make us better horseman. The old saying Calm seas never made a good sailor, perfect or easy horses never made a horseman.

You sound like you tried to take a short cut, thinking it would work and this horse said no way. The slow way is the fast way with horses. So you though to going back to the basic is good, but here is thought, sometime we get so focused on the problem that we make it a bigger deal than it is. A good rule is stick to what you are start on. Too often we start on one thing, the horse deflects us and before you know we are working on three different issues. Not good for the horse, then they get confused and they have to guess what we want, but since we got diverted and changed what we were working on we made the problem worse. Stay focused on one issue not all the issues. Fix one part of the issues first, like getting off on the left side. If he lets you mount on right, work him, do what he knows best and then start to get off (don't) shift your weight and make him think you are getting off on the left, be ready for his response or change, then sit back down or get off on the right. Keep tricking him into thinking you are getting off on the left and then don't. You should be able to get further and further each time, first shift weight to left, then take right foot out of stirrup, then stand on left stirrup, then swing right leg half over, do all this smooth but quick and then sit back down, he should react less and less, don't get off on left, this will teach YOU to read him, to know what to watch for, to know when not to go further, then after 5 or 10 rides he will learn that you fake getting off on the left and don't, he will start to ignore it and then one day, you get off before he knows it and bingo, you are off before he can react, and then work from there.

You seem to really be caught up in his fear, this does not make sense since he allows you to rope, run, control him, get on and off on right, it he allows all this, then he knows respect, he knows you are higher, so his actions seem more respect (lack of) related. I can't see him, so you have to read this, but you said you did not want him to buffalo you, I think you are on to something. I would get on him, grab that bucking strap, lean back and try and get him to blow, and every time he thought about it I would redirect his attention to flexing, back up or circles then let him stop and fake a left dismount ready for a blow up, teach him that you know what he is thinking, you make him work when he thinks it and he can't just be blowing up when he wants.

The rope burns on back leg could be from him pulling and running away with lead rope dragging or it could be they tried to tie up a back leg. If you can talk to trainer, ask him what was tried and what was results.

Some horses do not get the soft easy approach, especially if they have learned not to trust, so some require a little tougher methods. I will not be beat by a horse, I will not give up on him even if I have to get what some would say is mean. I know I have to make a horse safe or he will hurt someone and then they will want to kill him, so when I get tough, I know I do it to save a horse from a worst end. If nothing else works, I would hobble and maybe sideline or cross hobble and get on this horse if that did not work then I go as far as tying up one leg and doing, but this horse would learn to accept me getting on and off him. I do not recommend this to often and not saying do this, but if nothing else works, then I think you have to try every thing to save this horse so you can keep him and give him a good safe home. I would also lay this horse down to help him deal with his fear. This does not always work either. My Mustang was so abused, I can't imagine, I know they cut his nuts off with no anesthesia by tying his legs together, taking a knife and cutting them off and then setting lose in pasture. This horse is so more anti-people than me, he will run off on you, he will disrespect you, he will challenge you everyday, he is the strongest willed horse I have ever worked with and he has taught me the most and never lets me get away with anything or he takes advantage of it. Many times I think he needs a little lead to make him better, but I know it is not his fault. He will dump me in a second and run off wildly if I am not paying attention, but he has a heart as big as Texas and the will of 10 stallions. He was given to me since he was "crazy and dangerous", this horse will chase cattle, run up hills, swim a river and never get tired, but if you relax, if you don't pay attention, if you think he will not dump you, run off on you, drag you or let your guard down, he will exploit it and teach you a new lesson. It is a love hate relationship, but every time he gets me, I know it is my fault for not paying attention, it is my fault for not setting him up for success, I feel I let him down and then I make it right, I move him and reinforce my position as leader, I work him until he decides to drop his head and show me submissive behavior and then we are good for a maybe a day or so, but if I don't work him for just two days, he his back in my face and challenging me to see if I am still in charge or if he can move up. He is a tough horse and a lot of work and not much fun, but he is pure horse and I love him for him for that.

So this horse is going to take you on a new journey, he is going to force you to try new things, he is going to test your skills and make you prove you are smarter and you deserve to be his leader, he will not roll over and just give in and he will make you a better horseman and a better person, if he does not kill you. :(

With your past experiences you know how to try different things or do the same things in different ways, you have to keep trying to figure this one out, out think him, out predict him, out smart him and teach him he can't win with you and his only option is to submit to you as his leader. A million ways to do this, many that I don't know, but that is what makes tough horses so rewarding, they challenge you and just when we think we have horses figured out, one comes along and shows up we don't know crap. :)

As a horseman I don't think you should say a horse will not accept a rope halter, it is your job to show him that he can accept it, that he has to accept it, and that you are doing this for his own good and you will not allow him to fail or settle for less. You will not allow him to submit to his fear, you will not let him think that he can't and will show him he can. Put a freaking rope halter on him and tie him and do some sacking out and show this horse he can get scared and it is ok and you will not hurt him if he gets scared. Teach him it is OK to be scared but you can't blow up and run away. Teach this horse and he will soon learn you are smarter, you are a good leader and then he will trust you!

Hope this helps,

Rick

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

It is not fun him either. You are looking at this as a horse problem. I see this as a YOU problem. I see this as you are not giving clear cues, the horse is confuse, the horse is not ready, you have not taught the horse what you want, you have prepared the horse so he

knows what you want, you are going too fast, you are asking what the horse cannot give yet, you are pushing too hard or not pushing hard enough..... as you see, I think most all horse problems are people problems. I think this since if a trainer, or experience horseman or someone can get on a horse and make the horse better and do things that another can't, then it always tells me that the horse can do anything if it is asked right, taught right and showed right. A horse knows how to be a horse, too many people try to fix a horse, try to make a horse better, try to teach a horse..... if people listened to a horse and learned from a horse, then there would be less horse problems.

No matter what you are doing, it is either not working, the horse is confused, or the horse does not know what you want or what the right answer is. It always comes back to you or me or anyone. Until you see this as a you problem, YOU can't fix it.

Try going back to basic, get your horse to stop and go when you tell him, forget where he goes.... once you get him good at stopping and moving when you tell him, then work on moving and changing directions, left and right, stop and starts, then when he gets good at that, then have him go to one point and stop. Then go to another point and stop. If you take a few weeks and some time, you will get better with your cues and he will get better understanding what you want. It is a partnership, not a horse that you have to constantly correct...???

Question: Hi,

I have an 8 year old mare, TWH named Bella. She is a beautiful mare and is very sweet. We purchased her for my 11 year old daughter, however, not everything was mentioned about her behavior.

When you place the saddle pad on her back while she is tied, she starts to pace back and forth. She does the same when you place the saddle on her back and you have to move out of the way, holding onto the stirrup so that it does not fall with her pacing. Once I get her to stand and accept the weight, I attempt to cinch her girth up. At each time that I tighten the cinch, she does a little rear and a little more pace away from me. When I attempt to place the bit in her mouth while she is tied, she will rear away from the bit being placed in her mouth.

Now, if I remove her from the tie and tack her while she is ground tied, she will stand almost normal. She still does a little rear on the first tightening of the cinch, but only once. I can put the bit in her mouth without any issues.

While riding, she is lazy. I have been told that this is just a facade and that she is just waiting to explode. I have taken her out on more than a dozen trails and she does not do anything that would make me think she is out to hurt me or anyone else for that matter. She does not rear, buck, kick or bite. She just does not want to move out unless all the other horses are moving out. When I ride her alone, she just stands there and waits for me to kick her hard enough to get her to move out.

I can work with the riding part of this senero, but I am unsure what to do about the tacking up part of her behavior. This horse was to be for my daughter, and she will not ride her because of the way she acts when tacking up. I just need some guidance in how to work with her. I have tried tacking her up and just letting her stand at the tie for 30 minutes. She does not seem to mind standing. She only acts up when I attempt to tack her up.

Now, don't get me wrong, she has no ground manners. She will try to out walk you everytime, but she is coming along with that training. That is one thing I am good at working with on horses.

I run a horse rescue, so funds are limited. I have had one person state that I need to hire a trainer. I have been working with horses with behavior problems for many years, and only need a little guidance on how to handle this one thing. Can you help?
Thanks,

Answer: Sounds like your daughter is smarter than you. I absolutely think you should not be riding this horse, from what you said. Your first sentence said she is very sweet, later you say she has not done anything that would make you think she would hurt you.

Are you kidding me? This horse has screamed it does not trust you, it is confused, it does not respect you, it is just letting you do some things some of the time and tried to threaten you with rearing. This horse does not love you. It does not want to kill you, but it will. Your

question tells me you may have no fear, but you do not understand horses either.

This horse is has no ground manners according to you, what in the world makes you think that if you can't control it on the ground or if it does not respect you on the ground, why would that change once you were in the saddle? You give up 50% of your control when you mount a horse. So what every problem you have on the ground only gets twice as bad in the saddle.

This horse is not mean, it is not bad and it can be fixed, but you need to either get help or really invest some time in learning horses better.

I think you have been very lucky so far and I think you will get hurt if you continue with your way of thinking. That is your choice, but this horse does not have a choice, it is being forced into situations that it cannot succeed, you are putting your safety and this horses safety in jeopardy. This horse will have to pay for the mistakes you force on to it. I don't have much pity for people who get hurt by horses since they have a choice, but I really hate to see a horse get put down, hurt or abused because people don't understand them and set them up to fail.

Read my horsemanship page, my bad horsemanship page and horseman tips page, it may give you better insight to horse and help you see what you are doing to this horse.

Answer: Well, I agree with you about the dancing crap that is just another form of abuse. I still believe that most all horses can be helped. Since she does good on a lunge line, then I would lunge line her in a round pen, that way you can have better control and help support her with something she knows and is familiar with. Another option is to bring a chair and some hay to the center of round pen, have a seat, set her free and let her figure it out, don't ask for anything, just let her run or come in and eat or wonder why you are sitting in the middle of the pen, another option is you don't go to middle and walk her to rail, take her halter off and let her get with you standing by the rail, I don't think she will run you over, but have not seen her, but normally they see you as pressure and will avoid you and if they can't run in a circle, they are forced to slow and think. You could also put a temp panel in the round pen, creating a block so she cannot run in a circle and when he ran to temp panel, she would have to stop, turn around or slow and go around it, all making her slow and think and stop reacting (running) Each thing you unteach her about her prior abuse or bad training will make it easier for her to learn more.

It sounds like you have to teach her to deal with her fear. Sacking out is the key here. I have a section about this on my horsemanship page of my site, check it out and it will really help this horse if done right. She has to be taught that it is OK to be scared.

I would not put out to pasture, it sounds like this horse needs to be around people so it can learn not to be so nervous around them and learn that not all people are going to abuse her. I would suggest having a good rider pony her on some trails, let her get exposure without a rider telling her what to do and let her figure out things and experience things from the end of a lead rope. If you take her out 10 or more times you can, if the area and safety permits, take off her halter on the way back to the barn and let her follow the herd (horses and riders) and other horses on her own since she will want to head home (back to barn) and then can explore and figure things out without human interference.

Time, proper handling and helping this horse learn to be scared but not react instinctively to her fear and teach her to think or look for direction when scared is the key.

Question: I am a 16 year old, who has had a cob on lone before ,and now has a 19 5month old dartmoor hill pony. I have had him for up to 4 weeks and some of his training is going ok ,but there is still some thing that worrys me about him e.g he is fine when on the yard but when i walk him up the lane he starts to rear up and miss behaves. And all so when i try to clean his hoofs out he tries to bit me, also when i groom him he sometimes backs away from me. Please could you find a way to help me out in his first lot of training.

Answer: Jodie this horse is just being a normal horse. Since it is 19 it has been taught by a lot of people and has learned how to watch people and figure out who is going to make him listen and who is going to just ask for him to listen. You have show him that you will accept that behavior. If you read my website, especially my horsemanship page, you will see that all horses see the world as a herd and this horse is treating you like a lower horse in the herd. You need to show him you are a higher horse and that he is the lower horse. Treat him the way he is treating you.

Read my site it will help you understand horses better and if you still have questions write me back.

Answer: My first thought when I was reading was what your trainer said about you are irritating or picking or giving too much leg with no release and the horse has leaned to ignore your legs and to react negatively to your legs. Then the arena issue came up and the horse can hate the arena and riding since it has become sour to feeling like it just gets ridden, worked, kicked, and has no fun. Then the rearing issue led me to think that you are too tight on the reins and pulling and holding back too much so the horse is not looking for release, you may be trying to stop him from turning his head to bite but it is still pressure and he is looking for release. You said your other trainer did not agree with your current trainer, what does he think the issue is.

It does not matter what the issue is, it all comes back to you. What you are doing is not working and making the horse do what it is doing. It could not not enough time with the horse not working, no relationship with the horse, hard hands, too much leg, working the horse too much in the arena, not giving enough release, lack of consistency, lack of understanding, lack of communication, like most horse problems, it always comes back to us. If we get the wrong answer we are asking the question wrong. If you get better your horse will get better. A lot of people get mad at me for always saying the problem is you, but it is. A lot of issues you are saying happens a lot to older riders who have not ridden a lot, get back into horse and are more nervous around getting hurt, more careful, more fearful so they tend to be tight reined, always pulling on the reins for security and tight seated and not relaxed, this tends to cause exactly what you are describing.

This is a you issue and not a horse issue, so if you change what you are doing, your horse will change what it is doing, too often people continue to do the same thing and then expect the horse to change, it will not work. The did not do this before you rode it, so it a pretty good bet you caused it, so you need to fix what you doing to get the horse to stop what it is doing.

Answer: It is too late to show him there is nothing to fear since you went too fast and in his mind, jumped off, fell off or abandoned him, then tried to grab his legs and scared the crap out of him. He is scared now more than ever and does not want to let you back on him. Since you TRIED and he has prevented you three times, you have now taught him that he does not have to let you and you can make him, so every you try something with a horse and fail, you teach him you are weak and not a strong smart leader. So now that he has learned all this, your work will be ten times harder and take ten times as long. Hence the saying "if you take the time it takes, it takes less time" and "the slow way is the fast way with horses."

I have a feeling the way you see things is not the way the horse sees them or you would not be where you are.

You have made some really bad choices, set the horse up to fail, not prepared the horse and now the horse has learned some bad lessons. It is much harder to un-teach bad lessons than to go slow and do it right. So any advice now would not work until you start over. First read my horsemanship page so you understand a horse and horse behavior better. You need to see this like a horse sees it and approach this as your problem and not the horse. And stop trying things that you cannot win, every time you do you make this horse smarter and more resistant.

I think from your you may already be over your head and may need someone who is more familiar and more comfortable with horses so they can teach you what not to do and teach the horse the right way so you can learn.

This is an easy fix and can be fixed pretty fast, but it needs to be done by someone who knows how to do, who will not try and do, who understands horses better and will set this horse up for success and not up to fail.

Read my web site and if you have questions write me back. Whatever you are doing is not working, so stop and learn a better way before you try again. You cannot expect a horse to change if you do not change.

QUESTION: This is a question that I'm pretty sure I know the answer to, so mainly I need confirmation. I have a 5 year old mustang mare that I picked up from the BLM 2 years ago, she is 16.5-17 hands(I'm really not kidding.) For two years she and I have done ground work,

mainly because she has been very unsure of her surroundings. It took Gig a year to relax within ten foot of me (she does not strike out but would spend an hour in constant motion.) Also, nervous sweat and snorts were huge features.

She has had the winter off and we resumed round pen, leading and ground work and as such is relaxed enough to eat while I'm standing 2 feet away. She and I haven't done feet or belly work. Oh, and this is my second mustang (the other is six and I personally have greenbroke) and I have quarter horses and appys. Just never one quite like this.

So here is the part where I need advise: my assumption is that she is just barely starting to understand that I am not a threat and that mentally has just started her training. I should keep going slow to avoid her having 'issues'. Is this correct?

ANSWER: No, I disagree with you, you are going too slow and this horse is training you. You are taking this long because of you not the horse. My mustang is pretty large and very herd savvy and very careful, alert, flighty, spooky, aware or whatever you want to call it. I can not baby him, I cannot go slower for fear of going too fast.

You are putting your limitations on this horse. You are staying in your comfort zone, you are unsure, you are being safe, you are worried about having issues, all of this tell me that your confidence is not where it should be and this smart mustang knows it, sees it and has your number. Don't make excuses for this horse which are really for you. Push this horse and push yourself, stop babying her, show her you know what you are doing, you are the lead horse, you are in control, you are confident, if you don't believe it, I assure you a mustang won't believe it.

);, so did you know the answer?

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Okay, wow. That is really accusatory. I'm sorry but geez, I'm not doing the extreme mustang makeover or have only one horse to deal with. And... do you have to answer a lot of question from people that are afraid of hurting their horses or being hurt by their horses?

I didn't mention anything about babying the Gig, not pushing her, or mean to imply that I, at any point, stop a training session because I'm scared of her.

One thing I didn't mention was that her rope (tied to the halter) came off the 1st at my place. Which you may find significant. And I did not mention where she is at in ground work. She worms, stands for the vet, shots and teeth, bathes without being tied, walks over logs, takes a rope around the belly (not tight enough to mimic a cinch), lunges correctly in the arena, yields hind and forequarters, side passes from the ground and, what oddly too longer than all of these things: walks through gates normally (instead of backing away then bolting thru. That was fun to fix, sarcasm). I mentioned feet and belly (which is specifically under the flank) as her problem areas, as she dances away and towards me when we get to that area.

My question was apparently lost in the explanation: I should assume that anything we worked of while she was in a panic/flight/I'm gonna flip over trying to get away' mode is not trained, yes?

I should discount the initial year as her 'getting to you' period?

Her relaxed point is where the brain actually starts registering what is going on. i.e. just because she stops fighting being snubbed to a fence does not mean that she knows how to tie (just as an example).

With other horses I'd sack them out and start lunging them in a snaffle and introducing the saddle and really go after the feet but with her I'm thinking slowly get her used to it by 'burning' her with the rope. (for anyone reading this: 'burning' is holding both ends of a rope and running it up and down the leg no actual burn damage done to horse.)

And just so we're clear: my 4 mo old weanling is starting in a halter, the yearling stands, clips, ties, lunges and loads. My 2yo stud knows not to act like a snot with me. Plus 8 other broke

horses, none of have made me stop and say "I'm not sure where we're at and where to go next."

But Gig is the only one who ran wild for three years. And I'm kinda stuck with what I should focus on.

And, do you have any feet suggestions? The only other thing I know is to rope a foot and 'take it away' but I really don't want rope burned hands and I'm not sure I could hold her. Which, if she got loose would teach her the wrong lesson.

Answer: lol, you are killing me... what you call accusatory I call giving you a guess with the information you gave me. If you don't tell all the information, how do you expect me to come up with a usable and productive answer. It would be like trying to figure out a math equation with only some of the numbers. So I tell you I have 10 numbers and they add up to 10,254 and I say one of the numbers are 3, so would you please tell me what the other 9 numbers are????? I can only guess. You are not specific with what you want, what the horse knows, what you know, so I guess. Your first question was 9 lines and your follow up to tell me I was wrong was 25 lines.

You want to tell me "this horse is different". All horses are different. This horse is making you better and teaching you more and forcing you to try something different. You are doing the same thing and expecting different results. I still believe the horse, over people, every time!

This horse is telling you that you don't know how to get past his belly, his feet, or whatever else you want to think the issue it. This, like most all horse issues, is a you issue. You want to think since you have done this with other horses and they are good, therefore, it must be this horse, Wrong! This horse has identified a weakness in you, he has figured out how to prevent you from doing what you are trying to do, I don't care how he does it, he does it. You can change this and teach him he can't stop you or you can continue to teach him he can stop you. You being human want to make this about the horse being wild, others want to make it about the horse being abused, others want to make it about something else, in my book, it does not matter a horse is a horse, they have a walnut brain and we are smarter (in theory) because of our brain and ability.

I don't know you, don't know the horse, never have seen either of you work and if I did, it would still be somewhat of a guess or opinion on how or what to do next. You, and others, want me to be right, specific and have an answer from only a "short" email from a person who sees the problem from their eyes, their filters, there knowledge or lack of knowledge and then want to tell me that I am wrong and the horse is wrong. I can be wrong, the horse cannot. The has no choices, the horse is stuck with you and your limitations, you can choose all actions and the horse either pays, learns good or learns bad.

You don't put a rope on a horses foot (hoof) to stop it from running, therefore it cannot burn the horse. If the horse knows how to tie, then you just expose the rope and teach the horse, via pressure and release to accept the rope, anywhere, and give release. A horse can only fail if you fail, a horse can only learn if you learn. Stop thinking that just because you got lucky with a few horses that you know! This horse is telling you and me, that you don't know. Learn from him, show him that you are a smart leader that even when you don't know, you can figure it out, you can come up with a way to help him learn, you can think outside the box to teach him.

Every horse I work with that has a "so-called" problem, the owners give me a list of reasons why the horse has this problem. And then when the horse does not have the problem with me, the light still does not come on. They still do not get that the problem is not the horse it is them. That is when I get the grand mystical explanations about how this horse likes me, or how I have a gift, or how the horse must trust men, or some other foolishness. The answers are ALWAYS the same:

A horse is a horse
A horse is a reflection of you
A horse knows if you know
It is never the horse's fault
It is almost always the human's fault..... which leads me back to you

Bottom line, what you are doing is NOT working. Change what you do and the horse will change what it does. Listen to the horse, it will tell you what works and what does not work, you may have find 20 things that do not work before you find what does... it is up to you, not

me, not the horse, you are the only one with all the choices.

Or of course you can always blame me for being rude and not knowing what I am talking about and email other people for advice until you hear what you like.... this seems to work for a lot of people.. (sarcasm)...

I have tons of stuff on my site, read it, something may click, something will hit home and you will get something from it, but only if you make a choice to read it with an open mind and forget those silly human emotions like pride, ego, arrogance, and many others that get in the way of "thinking like a horse"...

:)

Question: hi and thanks for reading this. and i have read your web page and its helped me alot.

two questions first one.

1)can you wash your horse to much? i have never had a problem with this but i wash my horse about once a week in the summer i thing its good for the horse and me. lol. i turn her loose and she just roles in the dirt when im done but some one told me it was unhealthy to wash your horse this much. (my brothers wife said that, been eating on me, they dont like how i train or even ride my horse because i am way into natural horsemanship and they do things cowboy way but hay you never no she might be right so thought id ask. dont want to hurt my horse)

2) i got my horse very soft but for some reason i am having trouble teaching her to yeild her front hind quarters she know how to move her back in and out of saddle. heres what ive been doing so please tell me whats going wrong, ok i always start training out of saddle before i exspect it to happen in saddle so i have been standing on the ground putting pressure on her shoulder tring to get her to yeild her front legs but all she keeps doing is moving her back legs in a circle like i was pushing on her hind quarters but im not. i dont no what to do im stumped. so please help? shes a very fast learner so i no i have to be doing it wrong.

Answer: Well, washing a horse too much depends? Are you using soap? If you are then that is too much. If you just hosing the horse off with water and removing some dirt and sweat, then it is fine. Soap is not good for horses since it removes oils and leaves detergents and chemicals behind. It may make them look cleaner or shiny but not natural or helpful. In the summer I hose my horse off every time I work them into a sweat, it helps remove salt and makes them cooler and then they roll in the dirt which helps scratch their skin, distributes oils and removes dead hair, all natural.

As for your other issue, it sounds like the horse is confused. Try backing your horses into a corner of a fence, facing out away from the corner. Then move her front end/shoulders left and right, since you remove the ability for her to back up, since her butt is in the corner of the fence, then she will know what you want, once she does this good, then try it with her butt against a wall or fence, she will tell you when she gets what you want. This does not sound like a reisant issue, but more of a confusion issue, so that tells me your cues are good enough, you are not helping her find the right answer by prevent the wrong answers.

If she is hobble trained, you could hobble the rear feet and then only her front feet would be able to move. This would not be my first choice, but the you teach the wrong answer (allowing her back up) the more harder it will be to re-teach her the right answer.

Question: I recently adopted a 6 year old mustang that was on its way to slaughter. She was very underweight, but has recovered well. We have no history on her but she appears to be worked with, broke to lead and tie, you can touch everything on her, she does not spook BUT SHE HATES having her back feet messed with, which causes a problem with hoof care. I have been trying to work on clicker training and approach and retreat technique with her, but she still stamps her feet when I try to touch the back...Any suggestions or good articles to read?

Answer: Read my sacking out section and my horsemanship page on my site. This is not a

horse issue, you are not doing something right since the horse is not getting better. The horse is telling you that you are doing it wrong, if you keep doing the same thing, you will not get different results.

This sounds like the horse is just being resistant and knows the worst thing you will do is click. Clicker training may be good in something, carrots may be good in some things, showing a horse who is boss for some things, having calm patience for some things, being aggressive for some things, many ways to train a horse, and the only right way, is when you get the results you want.

This is simple and easy fix for someone who understands pressure release, sacking out and talking to a horse so they can understand. This is not happening, not because I say so, because the horse is telling you so.

YOU say "she hates it", I say she knows she does not have to listen, she knows you are not a strong leader, she does not respect you, she sees you as a lower horse, you are doing it right. Big difference in what most people see with horse problems and what I see.

You say this is causing hoof problems. I say you are failing the horse, you are fixing this so the horse cannot get proper foot care. You did not work with her feet enough, you did see this problem and work on it enough before it became this big problem.

Read my website from start to finish and you will see horses differently and then you see this problem differently and then you change what you do and then the horse will change what it does.

Question: I was wondering if you had any advice on how to get my horses to drink from their water tub again. I had a water de-icer in their tub, but I noticed they quit drinking from it. When I put my hand in the water, I felt a tingle, not a major shock or anything, but a tingle. I took that de-icer out altogether and just broke the ice for them for a while, they wouldn't drink. Then I bought a new de-icer-it's working perfectly fine, however the horses still will not drink from it. Is there a way I can get them to trust it again?

Answer: Try throwing a few apples on top, they will float, maybe give them a bite and then drop the rest in the water, pour a teaspoon of salt in your hand and see if they lick it and then they might take a drink.

This like most problems is not a horse problem. You failed to check it, you taught them they get shocked (tingled as you say) when they drink and now they learned. Had you been more prudent, checked, made sure the tingle worked you would not have this issue, as I am sure you know, but this is a common problem with horse owners who love their horse and then do what I call, "set them up to fail".

You may have to get a different bucket for a while, you may have to bring them warm water from the house for a while, you have to put out several different water buckets and let them choose.

Horses are one the most sensitive creatures on the earth, they can shake a fly from the hip when it lands, what you call a tingle was not a tingle to a horse, it was an electrical wave that they felt and it was more than just a little uncomfortable or they would not be avoiding it so much that they wont drink.

In the mean time fill up their grain buckets with water or put a hose in on and let it run slowly so it will not freeze so at least they get some moisture. Impaction colic is more common in the winter. This is another case of people wanting to help so much that they end up hurting the horse more. Much like blankets, stalls, shoes and other things people do to horses in the name of loving them.

[Move to top of page](#) ↑

Question: I hope you may offer me some insight into the behavior of my 14ish blue-eyed QH

gelding. I brought him home from the trail stable where I used to work after he developed an ulcer in his right eye. (More common bc of the blue eyes? Not sure, if it matters.) Stable couldn't pay the vet bill, and so I did, "buying" myself the horse. It was a pretty terrible looking thing, but healed fairly quickly, considering. Now he has no visible scarring in the eye, and rides as good as ever (at least for someone who requires respect from him, but he has never done well with riders without leadership skills :) I am sure you understand.).

I recently moved, and my new neighbor has a round pen he lets me use. I have no way to tell if this horse had ever been in one before I got him, but he took to it wonderfully. His transitions are beautiful. Locks on quickly. Smart boy, despite his years of over work and confusing tourist-riders... All that, until I try to work him with his right side turned to me. Going this way he tenses up (practically screaming at me with his body language), cuts in drastically- not on top of me, but as quick as he can until he has turned himself around so he can see me with the left (healthy) eye.

The more I tried to get him going, the more scared and tense he became. So I quit. Maybe the wrong thing to do, but I didn't want to do more damage than good by sending the wrong signals. Not too proud to admit when I don't know what I'm doing ;).

So all that background, and now the question: The vet says the horse has no loss of sight, but could he be wrong, based on this behavior? Or is my boy just testing me? Edgar has a bit of a dominant personality that I am used to dealing with, but this seemed like more than that. If he IS actually partially blind in this eye, should I worry about the roundpen at all? We still trail ride with no problems, and were long before I suspected a problem. If I should continue to roundpen and he is inhibited, do you have any tips on how to get him to trust me on that side? Let me also mention that otherwise he shows no particular spookiness on the right side, and blinks normally at motion as well (waving my hand there, etc.)

I would appreciate your honest advice. I realize you are not a vet, but what does it sound like to you?

Answer: As usual I can only guess by what you tell me and like most questions I get, I have more questions. Do you lunge the horse on line, when lunging do you have the horse go both ways, does he show any problems with on line being lunged, this would be my first few questions. I tend not to believe much of what I am told so even if the vet said the horse has no sight loss, I would cover the good eye and see how the horse handled things with only the possible bad eye open. Then cover the other eye and see if the horse changes, that would tell me better if the horse has eye issues. Just because the horse did not lose any sight, there are other things that could be going on, loss of night vision, near sighted, far sighted, impaired depth perception, clouding, loss of focus... just like our eyes, we can have many varied issues.

The horse is telling you something, what that is, I am not sure. I would force the issue without doing smaller steps to set the horse up for success. Before I push a horse and come to conclusion that the horse is being resistant or dominant, I want to make sure I have ruled out all other possible causes.

So I would do the eye cover thing on each eye and do lunging on line both ways, and do circles while riding both ways and make sure the horse is equal on both sides. Once I am convinced the horse is capable then I would go back to round pen and try and work calm and slow, both ways, as soon as the horse looks to get tense in a direction, help him and change direction to the other way, take him back to where he is comfortable, slow him down and try and slow direction change to the uneasy side and try and keep him slow and controlled, if he gets upward or nervous then take control, slow, stop him and change direction to calm him. He may just be nervous from lack of work on that side, he may have eye issues, he may have shoulder or back issue, hoof pain, uneasy or just feel insecure that way so he compensates by trying to take charge and be strong, so it may not be he is pushing you, but may be dealing with what is going on in his own way, help him, understand that you do not know and build him comfort level, but still be a strong leader and control him direction, speed, stops and turns. There should be no running until he is Responding, not reacting, and tells you he is ready for faster speeds.

Horses need understanding and just fast results and total acceptance of everything new or different. It takes time, exposure, repetition, consistency, confidence and lack of pain or fear all coupled with a firm fair and strong leader.

And I would be remiss if I did not say you are causing this, making it worse, not preventing it, not helping it and teaching this in some way. If you get better, the horse always gets better. Just maybe you are not that good in a round pen and you need to figure out how and what you are doing to contribute to this behavior.

Rick

Question: I have a dyer old warmblood gelding, He has been a great horse, he has been very patient with his green rider, and has taught me many a valuable lesson.

I bought him as a just broken 5 year old, the person i bought him from also started him, he was wonderful throughout the whole "starting process".

I had lessons with this person for the first five years of our training, being personally connected to the horse, she kept things very basic for the whole time, we did lots of lateral work and walk trot, lunging and in hand work she did not want me to canter as, i quote "it was such a good canter she did not want me to stuff it up". so i never did.

she left us three years ago, i had to find someone to keep us moving forward and cantering had become a problem, my guess is i was worried about stuffing it up and was sending him mixed messages so after a few weeks of trying i would ask %26 he would just stop. I should mention, perfect on voice command on the lunge.

We had several lessons with a great female instructor who is a great dressage rider. she has us cantering and doing simple changes willingly in the first lesson but she was not available to give us any more lessons as she was getting ready to compete overseas.

Then 18months ago i got very ill and had to undergo treatment, i was not allowed to ride %26 although it almost killed me i was very rarely even allowed to go visit him. i didn't want to just put him in a paddock somewhere so i sent him to an instructor who was a student of the previous instructor. within the first two weeks he was rearing on every step, full rears straight up with no going forward, i explained he had never done that before even dealing with a green rider, she told me he had been lazy for too long and needed to be snapped out of it and was acting out.

it went on for a month before i was able to get clearance to go visit, after seeing it myself i called in a stock horse rider the next day who jumped on with no extra gear just simple bridle and saddle and after two rears straight off the bat Jonti went forward, he on occasion tried to throw one in but really he was quite forward and responsive.

My suspicion was that he may have injured himself or at the very least had been working so hard that he was stiff and sore and that he was in uncomfortable or in pain. i insisted they at least give him some time off. i had a chiropractor go out and work with him. it was confirmed Jonti was very stiff and sore and after two weeks of time off and treatment, she put him back into work.

Within a couple of months he was back to rearing again.

The day i was given the all clear i put my gear and went out to ride, within a few minutes i knew something was up, he was not moving as his usual loose fit self he was stiff and not supple or accepting at all, he did not rear but i felt i could not push him either. i loaded him straight on the trailer and we went to the vet, he did not pass the flexion test and x-rays showed bone changes to the areas around the coffin joint. the vet told me to get rid of him and find myself another horse... I found another vet, we found that Jonti had a soft tissue injury to the back of the left fore foot (possibly a tear in the DFT) we decided to give him some time off to see how he looked. six months later he is in a paddock and spends his days terrorizing everyone. He is not showing any signs of the lameness he once showed even in the walk. so after discussing it with the vet i am going to start him back into work in a few weeks... Very slowly.

i am worried about the rearing... after reading a few other e-mail you have written i realise that it is the rider and to be honest i always thought it was, but can horses learn it as behavior? if he is sore will he rear on me or will he show me little signs? The woman who had him told me

he was dangerous and that he would kill someone. She has put the doubt in my mind and i will admit although i know the Jonti i knew would never do it is it likely she has changed him?

your opinion and any advice would be greatly appreciated. Many thanks in advance.

Answer: First I don't see any bad manners by this horse. All so called bad behavior is taught to horses by people, so anything a horse does, is the fault of people around them. Bad horses are never born, they are made.

You, like many women in horses, want to look for things that cause behavior, like pain, abuse, neglect, bad fitting saddles, lack of vitamins, hormone imbalance and many others. And some of these may be the case in some horse. But normally, horse behavior is created by the people handling the horse.

The problem is once a horse learns that by doing these things (refusing to go forward and rearing) then it becomes habit and the horse learns to do to get out of work. And each time someone new 'tries' to fix it and fails the horse gets better and better at it, so it is harder to fix and more dangerous to horse and rider.

The horse could have been injured by someone not knowing what they were doing and caused the horse to flip over and hurt itself, now the horse is scared and confusion, of course most people that do this do not tell the owner since they don't want to be blamed or billed for vet expenses, which is why I don't let people handle my horses unless I am there and even then I am quick to intervene if I see bad lessons being taught.

So not sure if I covered your questions or if I answered what you were looking for, but that is my take from what you told me.

Question: I just recently rescued a 2yo Tennessee walker mare who has one eye, she is very uncontrollable. I have been trying to train her 4 times a week using pat parelli methods but nothing is working she is still just as bad. she kicks in her stall, kicks at people, she kicks at me when I touch her legs, just kicks at every thing. Also my farrier will not trim her feet,he says she is to badly behaved, she rears in the cross ties and kicks out. I don't blame this on her, it is from lack of training and socialization from when she was a yearling and having one eye doesn't help. Also recently she ran right through 3 lines of electric fence. I don't want anyone to get hurt around her. I think inside all horses are good horses and she is not out to kill anyone but my BO wants me to give her away or put her to sleep. Now I don't know where to start should I try a different training method? which one? I really don't want to give up on her. Please help me

Answer: This horse is a baby and has had bad handling by people that dont understand horses. The horse kicks since no has taught it not to kick. You need put the horse out with other horses so they can teach it how to behave. Keeping a horse in a stall causes a lot of this since a horse hates to be locked up. So this young baby horse has been set up to fail and what you call rescue, is not what I call it. You are talking and getting advice to kill this horse because you don't know what you are doing. I do not think that is what rescuing is about.

Just because you think you are doing Pat parelli method, you don't understand horses at all. The one eye thing is an excuse by people that can't accept responsibility for not knowing and screwing up horses.

I have seen blind horses that are ridden and are calm and fine. Killing a horse is never justified, it is an excuse and a bad one. Give the horse to someone who really wants to rescue the horse and who understands horses. You say you don't blame her, I would rather you blame her and not be talking about putting her to sleep.

Why dont you try learning more about horses, do research, read, go visit other good horsemen, find someone local who can help you or at least find the horse a good home. When people write me about loving horses, rescuing horses, not wanting to be mean to horses and other crap and then in the same questions talk about putting a horse to sleep, my response is I would like to the them what they do to horses.

Anyone that suggest putting a horse to sleep for kicking is an idiot and deserves to be kicked. You say you are worried about others getting hurt around the horse, I am worried the horse is going to be killed being around you and others that don't understand horses.

Question: What is your philosophy the use of horse shoes? I am collecting perspectives on the topic without judgement. My experience is that they are 100% not necessary and in fact detrimental to the whole system. This can be considered a complicated question when considering all the factors, which I understand as I have examined this issue extensively for several years. what is your experience with the use of shoes? Do you use them? When/Why? Can you see how they may cause harm to the physical/biological makeup of the horse? Thanks, from one tuff gal- i'm not afraid of anything you may say- I've heard alot already!

Answer: I did an article on pros and cons of shoes, here is a link:

http://www.equestrianlife.com/articles/133/Horse_Shoes;_Pros_&_Cons/

Short answer, it is an archaic tradition that bad for the horse and just another way for a lot of unethical Farriers to convince the unknowing that they are needed. If you read my horseman tips page, I have some very good photos of the hoof and how it should work naturally. A metal horses shoe stops all flexing and natural action of the hoof. The nails compromise the hoof wall and let in bacteria which can cause issues. Horse shoes and jumping are two very popular things that people like to think horses like or it helps horses, they both do lots of damage to the horse's legs and hoofs and horses were designed for either.

If you review some of my other answers about horse shoes I am sure you will get more info, I also discuss this in different areas on my site. I am not a fan, don't like them, if I was a horse, I would not want them, and if you think they are good, then put a metal plate in your shoe and walk around for a few hours and then tell me how it does not hurt the horse.

Question: Hi Rick,I really enjoy reading the answers you have given to people,finding it funny how those folks don't like what you suggest for them to do to fix the problem.Most of them just don't like new ideas,they think that there is nothing wrong with them.Oh well! I hope you read this and do answer my dilemma! own a saddlebred gelding that is 10 years old. He is with one to four other horses all the time. He always paces the fence line,for hour at a time,back and forth with his head hung over the fence lifting his head up and over each post as he passes by them.I know his keeps him in good shape,but I can hardly keep weight on him due to his constant walking.He walks for 6 to 8 hour a day.It doesn't matter if he is in the pasture with grass or in the corral with food.He only eats a little bit and then off to the pacing,stopping occasionally for a nibble then back to it.Thanks for your time,hope you answer.Thank you Larry

Answer: Pacing is a coping behavior for a horse that was either locked up alone or locked away from other horses. He is doing to since he has learned to find comfort and safety and probably has used this to occupy his time from going stir crazy and getting cabin fever. I would definitely stop it somehow. Where ever he is looking is causing some draw, either a stall, the barn, food, some place he wants to be. I would make it hard for him to do it.

First if you take him and put him I would stop that and leave him out 24 7 with other horses, not alone. Then I would put obstacles in his pace path, lay down some railroad ties, lay down some old gate, some round fence post, some tires, water buckets, cones bricks, plastic tarp, wooden crates, anything that makes it hard for him to walk a straight line or path along that fence. I would put up extensions or long poles so he can't get his head over them when he walks, then maybe run some hot wire to keep him off that fence, then tie some plastic bags to the fence at different levels and spacing.... basically make that fence hard work to pace. Have that fence become very busy, make him have to walk over and around things in order to pace that fence, you can put up some temp panels at ever other post to make him hit a corner at each post so he has to change direction or walk about the panel (like a T at post).

If you find the draw (whatever the horse is looking at or where he wants to go (his attention)) then if you remove that draw. If it is the barn, then he only works at the barn and never gets to relax there, if it is a horse, then put the horse with him, if it his stall, then don't put him in the stall for a while.

This is a habit and once you break it he will forget and move on.

Good luck, use your imagination, make the wrong thing hard and right thing easy. Pacing wrong, make it hard.

[Move to top of page](#) ↑

Question: Hi, I'm having a problem with this one horse I've been trying to buy. The man who broke him used what I think you call the old "macho tough cowboy" style, and now, this horse is so frightened of people, you can't get near him. At least, most people can't. I've been trying patiently to get him to relax, and he's started to let me walk up to him. Good, right? The problem is that his owner says that she needs to get rid of him NOW and if I'm not going to buy, then I can't come out to see him any more. And my trainer has only ever seen him at his worst, so she's pretty much dead against me spending time with him, since she thinks he's super dangerous. (I know- all horses are dangerous. But this one just needs some understanding!) Can you either give me a suggestion of what to tell her, or a way to make the horse calm down enough around someone else that she can see that he isn't some sort of wild beast. I know this is sort of an "out-there" question, and I understand if you can't help answer it, but could you please think about it and try to help me?

Answer: This sounds more of a people issue (owner) than a horse issue and my way of handling people normally pisses them off. I would tell the owner, you know the risk, you are an adult and want to take the risk and will not hold him or the horse responsible for what happens. If you can't get back the ignorance of people you can't help the horse. I see horses every day that need help very badly, but their owners are so ignorant and ego driven that they would don't care what their horse needs they care what they need, how they feel and what they want. The most selfish and mean spirited people I have ever met are into horses at barns. So not sure if that helps on that.

As for the horse, all horses are scared, especially wild Mustangs, I realize this fear may be from abuse and a wild horse's fear is from instinct, but I don't think it matters. Horses are herd animals that look for leaders. Leaders (higher horses) push lower horses. By pushing this horse, requiring it to move, controlling his direction, speed and movement all tell the horse you are stronger smarter and a good leader, that is what removes fear from horses. Not bribes, not love, not trying, not understanding their past abuse, none of that matters to a horse. If you do this the horse will start to trust you, will understand that you understand, will want to be with you, will follow you and will forget his past. If you just try and be nice and try and convince him to trust you and try and show him that you won't hurt him, his fear will get worse since he will see you weak, he will not trust you and will not want to be around you and all ignorant people will see this as calculating, mean, dangerous, crazy and other crap.

Question: We recently bought what we thought was a gelding. He is 4 and looks gelded. However, when my mare came in heat, he actually bred her and acted very "stud-crazy". He went through a fence and she kept encouraging him. We had to pen them both up and he about broke down the barn. We do not want or have facilities for a stud.

Answer: I discuss this on my horse health page and my horseman tips page. A would would have to check him to be sure. Time after gelding is a factor too, so depending when he was gelded, it may take a few months or so for this behavior to go away.

If he is gelded and he is breeding the mare, so what. Let them hang out, they will be horses and when she wants him to stop she will let him know. Keeping them locked up apart only increases the drive and causes more problems and stress.

Question: My daughter bought a 15 year old mare in September, We were told the mare was not pregnant but in October she miscarried, since then we have not been able to put weight on her. The vet flushed her and gave her antibiotics for 10 days and he said all the infection was gone. He said just feed her well and give her a few months and she would be ok. We feed her rice bran for about a month and didn't see any results. Now we are feeding her crimped oats with alfalfa cubes, and she has hay available all the time. She is still underweight

and it breaks my heart and my daughters. What can we feed her to get her on the road to recovery?? Please help us and our horse.

Answer: Sounds like you are doing OK. Oat hay or Rye hay is also good. It takes time to put on weight as long as she is eating, keep her moving, take her for walks to stimulate her eating, put her with another horses, she may be depressed from the loss or have some hormone issues, but none of that should matter, if she is eating, she should recover. Lots of hay available all the time so she can eat when she wants. Some rolled oats and rice bran is good. The alfalfa cubes, are OK, I don't like them since they are easy to choke on but if you get some bailed alfalfa and give a flake or so a day with the grass hay, I think that would be better.

Exercise and playing with other horses will help her grow muscle and eat more, but let her put her weight on over a few months don't rush it or you may cause colic. After four months or so, then I would have the vet do more test, but it takes a while for a horse to lose weight and it takes a while to put it back on.

Keeping her locked up, alone and over feeding is much worse than her being skinny, so don't do that.

Question: Hello, I bought a buckskin gelding who is approx 7 yo about 9 mo ago. The lady we got him from was selling him for a friend and knew nothing of his history or training other than he had not been ridden in > 1yr. Initially he was very anxious, he pawed and dug in his pen x 2 days and would stand in one corner of his pen all day (I watched him- literally stood there all day). He was hesitant to be pet or groomed and would stiffen up or even walk back to his corner. These issues have resolved. His ground behavior is still slightly hesitant, but he halters, saddles, and takes a bit beautifully. When I initially rode him he would not whoa or even walk. Once on his back he wanted to go (completely out of control) irregardless of commands. He whoas when I am on the ground to just verbal command (so he knows whoa), and he has since learned to walk with constant queing. This horse has been rein trained, turns on a dime, and is VERY sensitive to leg pressure (even just leg movement). The problem is his bad attitude is coming out. He will not drop his head even after being lunged for 30 min, and is even giving me a hard time going into the round pin. When he is commanded to whoa (asking and/or pulling back on the reins)he either shakes his head and/or pulls it down in attempts to pull the reins out of the riders hands while continuing to move. He wants to go fast all the time, but not in a controlled way. I ride him with neck reining, leg cues, and I have a light hand. When asked to turn he turns fast and takes off, even a slight movement (no cuing) to my foot he takes off. He has improved since I initially rode him as far as walking, but he runs through every bit I have tried from a less severe bit to a high port straight bit even a hackamore, a twisted snaffle, a regular snaffle, a copper roller, a reining bit... it's all the same to him. He is so high strung and pretty much a wild card when we ride. I would say 1/6 times when asked he stops momentarily. I have pulled the reins hard to 1 side and touched his nose to his back... he will cont to walk in circle or even lean hard to the other side as if he is going to fall over. I know he has some kind of cutting training, he is real cowy. Once saddled he will follow me, like I said he is great on the ground. I don't know how to make him just stop, listen, and relax. Am I doing something wrong? What can I do to change this behavior? I know he has potential, but I have just about had it. How do I get his attention when ridding?

Answer: You appear to be blaming the horse. Most all horse problems are people problems. Read my horsemanship page on my site, it will help you understand horses better.

Question: Hello Rick! There was a photo I saw on YouTube, where two mounted policemen where crossing an open grassy area in something like a park. One horse had stopped, spread its back legs wide, lifted its tail high, and was relieving his bladder. The rider had leaned forward bit, and had moved his lower legs up along his mount's flanks. Would the policeman have needed to move his legs so as not to get splashed?? I once saw a mounted NYC officer whose horse was voiding on the street; in that case would the officer have his legs splashed? Also, in the photo the other horse seemed to be looking over at his companion; might he have been noticing what the first horse was doing? Does one horse ever decide to open the waterworks when a horse nearby relieves itself? Thanks!

Answer: Where a rider sits on a horse is where the horse's kidneys are at. So it is considered good horsemanship to lean forward with a horse is voiding his bladder. By leaning forward it takes pressure on the horse's back and kidneys which is said to make it more comfortable for the horse. A good horseman will always try and make his horse as comfortable as he can. The legs could have moved to prevent splashing, but by leaning forward the legs naturally go back in order to shift the weight to the front of the horse and hold yourself off the horse's back.

Horses do not like to pee on themselves so they spread out (also called parking) in order to avoid splashes.

As for the other horses keying on this, it depends. Sometime a lower horse will go if the higher horse goes and sometime they key off each other and others times they don't, it depends on the situation, comfort level of the horses and the surroundings. Normally horse being ridden together do not want to fall back or get separated so they stay close and will not pee as to not get left, so if they both have been holding for a while and one goes, the other will seize the opportunity and go as well.

Question: hello sir. may i know how does bareback riding gives a good balance to the rider?

Answer: Riding bareback is just one way to get better balance. If you ride in a saddle with stirrups you tend to use your legs more and not use your hips, stomach, shoulders and arms for balance, so you get lazy and only use your legs in the stirrups. By riding bareback you don't have stirrups so you can't just use your legs and this forces you to use your entire body, which builds those muscles and the stronger they get they better your balance becomes.

As I said this is one way, being in shape and not over weight helps, riding more helps, doing other things like riding bides, walking on boards, climbing ladders, playing sports that require balance all help. Like most things with the body, the more you use it the better you get and the less you use it, the worse it gets.

Question: Hello, I have had this mare a few months now she is only 4 and as yet unbroken. She was imported from Holland before I came to own her and was kept in full time due to lack of grazing for a week at the dealers I bought her from, but was allegedly living out before. I let her chill out for the first day and take everything in, on the second day I turned her out in a 2 acre paddock next to my second horse, expecting her to let off some steam and have a chat with her new buddy. She trotted into the field up to Cruise had a chat and seemed relatively ok, until she turned around, from this field you can see the whole of the yard and all the other fields. I think she was a little overwhelmed by this as she stood very tense and snorting loudly twice then pacing along the fence to a different spot to do this again. Obviously she was relatively stressed but due to her not galloping around I didn't gather how stressed. I watched her for 20 mins and figured she should settle, so I popped to get some haylage to take her mind off things, but she was too stressed to eat, and was sweating a lot, so I clipped on the leadrope and spoke softly to lead her back through the gate to chill in her comfort zone the stable. Whilst walking across the field as she wouldn't leave the level of the field she was on, she spent most of it on her hind legs, but as soon as we went through the gate onto the enclosed drive she calmed down and walked as normal as you expect a 4yr who is panicking to walk.

I put her into the stable and sponged her with warm water and put on a thermatex type rug to avoid a chill and dry her quickly, but through the stress she experienced in the field for 30mins she brought about spasmodic colic and understandably became dangerous to herself and everyone involved. After the vet had sedated her and given her painkillers etc she improved quickly and was lovely and relaxed when she came around properly. The vet told me to give her a small dosage of sedaline before turnout the following day so I followed the instructions and she behaved the same in the field, even though I have now reduced it to a 3/4 acre plot and she can no longer see as far, due to her sedation she was not able to work herself up into a sweat, but she isn't happy out, she doesn't seem to understand grazing, could she be agoraphobic? It just seems a bizarre problem as it isn't a natural reaction for a horse to hate turnout to the point of self destruct is it?

I have been putting her in a tiny paddock just next to the stables since for 5 mins a day but she won't graze and gets very wound up even in this short time. The poor girl just stares and snorts and I can't pin point what at, how can I help her through this? She isn't great in the arena either but not as bad at all. I would hate to give up and just keep her in full time as it

doesn't seem fair on her even though she is docile and chilled when in.
Final note she won't graze in hand either, sorry for the essay.

Answer: I think you are making more out of this. The horse may have been locked up so much that it feels fearful and insecure when not locked up, this is common when horses are neglected and abused, in my opinion, by people who want to love and protect a horse or by people that don't have time to catch a horse or train a horse so it's easy to keep them locked up.

This horse is born a grazing animal, it will go back to it. If let this horse go, it would run, it may panic for a while, but it would eventually stop and want to eat and drink. You say you let out for 5 mins, that is just making the problem worse. A horse sleeps maybe 2 hours a day, that leaves 22 hours of boredom, a horse's system is made for constant eating and grazing small amounts of food, so the colic was caused by the stress with a full belly, would be my guess. Don't feed the horse for a day before you turn her out, she will have less food in her belly, she will be hungry. Your first instinct was to give her hay after 20 mins.

All horses stress when let out in a new place, they snort and run to test the area for danger and to warn any predators. You stood there for "20 mins" and made this into a big deal and felt the need to save this horse.

You, like a lot of women, have this mother instinct to save and protect the horse. Horses always do better when people stay out of it. After 20 mins you say you put a blanket on the horse to prevent a chill. I have seen horses run for hours and sweat and they make it.

If you want to make this horse so dependent on you that you have to watch and save it every five mins or 20 mins, then nothing I can say will change that.

This horse is a horse, it is doing horse things and you are seeing what you want to see since you are not thinking like a horse.

If you want to try and put this horse with a buddy horse in a stall or other small area, leave the two horses together for a week or so ALL THE TIME, NOT JUST 20 OR 30 MINS, after a week with another horse, 24 hours a day they will buddy and herd up, then put them out together and let them be horse. After you let them out, LEAVE, and go have a cup of coffee and worry by yourself, so you won't have the urge to save them and interfere.

And like anything you do with a horse, the horse may get hurt or it may not. YOU CANNOT stop this no matter how hard you try and normally only make it worse by trying.

Question: I have a young Qh who is 2 1/2 years old and has been real mean bites, runs at us kicks just about anything he could ever do to us he has tried now. This is our first year with horses, we got a 4 year old gelding with this horse in May of '09 and at first he wouldn't mind us touching and everything but just recently he started being Mean.... how can we fix this issue?

Answer: This horse is NOT being mean. You are making him act this way since you do not understand horses. Read my horsemanship page on my web site and it will explain why this horse is treating you like a lower horse. This horse is being a perfectly normal horse and doing exactly what every horse will do when handled by people that just want to pet it, love it and treat it like a dog. Big difference in Predator pets like dogs and cats versus Prey pets like horses.

The short answer is how do you fix this, fix yourself, learn about horses, study them so you understand them and then you will stop calling them "mean" since you do not know what is happening so you put a label on the poor horse.

My website has over 400 pages of information about horses if you take the time to read it you can fix this, if you just look for fast answers or short cuts of tricks, then you will never understand this horse or any horse.

QUESTION: I have a 7 year old Arab (I've had him for 2 years.) He is amazing in the ring,

wonderful when being led, and loves to work. We can do a gazillion desensitizing courses and he won't get spooked, but the second we go into a show ring or out on a trail, he goes nuts. I am not scared when he flips out, so therefore I don't think he is getting scared because I am - I can lead him on a trail and go through the exact same situation and he'll do great, then get on him and do the EXACT thing again and he flips. I started on a trail ride once and he freaked over a phone pole, I ended up sliding down a hill on his back while he was rearing. I didn't get off him when that happened, we went back to the corral and worked for about two hours, but I did not go on the trail ride. We have 200 acres of trails and I'd love to be able to use them - please help me, any advice would be appreciated and I will not get mad if you say it's my fault...after all there isn't a problem horse, just problem people.

ANSWER: Well, you are right on the last part, I do think you are either causing this or not being a good strong leader so the horse will not do it, you are not giving good clear and understandable directions, you are making the horse confident, you are not aware of what you are doing, you are not aware of what you should be doing, you may expect this and then that ends up causing it.... it could one of these or a combination of two or more.

This horse is telling you something. It is screaming at you and you need to find out why and what you can do to help this horse. This horse does not want to fight you and does not want to do anything you are explaining, it shows that since it does fine when you are off him. You are doing the same thing and getting the same results. You do not see this as the horse is confused, the horse is insecure, the horse is not respecting you, the horse does not think you are a good leader. You have to see this as if you were the horse, what is going on, how can you help, how can you show him what you want.

I can't believe that if I walked a horse over a log both directions 2 or 3 times, and then sent the horse over the log 2 or 3 times and then got on the horse that the horse would not walk over the log. Most horses like to go back home, back to the barn, back to their friends and other horses where they feel safe. So if you want a horse to do something that is hard, then have the horse do it in a direction it wants to do. So walk the horse over the log a few times both directions and then get on the horse and have it walk over the log, facing and going back to barn, not going away from barn.

I think you are trying to fix all this and that is why nothing seems to work. Break it down to each little thing. Each problem needs to be dealt with so the horse learns to win, learns to learn, learns that it is ok to be scared but you will help him, "not make him". Each time you help him, the next time will be easier. You have to accept small little victories and not try and make a "perfect horse". All horses are scared, the ones that don't act scared are being handled right and by people that understand them, the horses that are scared and "flipping out" as you say are being handled by people that can't help the horse, that can't change what they do, that can't admit they are causing the horse to be that way. You have had this horse for 2 years, no telling what the first 5 years were for this horse, two years is nothing to undo 5 years. This is just normal horse stuff, this horse is teaching you, so learn from him. He will make you learn new ways to help him, he will make you better, if you grow, if you think you are not scared, not doing anything to cause this and this is a horse problem, then you will not grow and you will do what most people that don't know do. Sell the horse, send it to trainers, fight with, keep doing the same thing and expect different results.

This needs to be a challenge, you need to try and outsmart this horse, you need to help the horse learn, find a way to work through each of these problems. This really sounds like a leadership and confidence issue from you. You may think you know and think you are confident, but you can't fool a horse, a horse does not care how much you think you know, the only one who knows what you do. Either you can help him learn and make him safe and better or you can't. A horse knows, this horse knows and now you need to know. Fix yourself, when you get better a horse gets better. This horse would not do this if I rode it, I can almost guarantee it. But every time I rode this horse and it did not do any of this, it would not change anything, except maybe to prove you that the problem is you. And even then I have had many come up with other reasons, so even seeing it does not convince those who are sure it is not them.

As for the rearing down the hill, I assure you that was your fault. The horse was being forced by you, you were using the bit and reins, you were putting pressure and the horse could not handle it, it was confused, it felt trapped or fearful and that is what normally causes rearing. You made a point of saying you don't get off the horse when he does this, this is his belief that not getting off a horse is somehow always good. I don't believe that. Sometime getting off,

putting the horse to work while you are on the ground helps the horse feel more confident and understand better, then get back on and try it in the saddle. I hear this all the time, my horse bucked me off and I got back on, that is not smart and is just a good way to get bucked off again and each time a horse bucks you off he learns how to buck you off better.

So look to yourself for the answer and the problem and if you work on it from a horse's point of view you guys will grow together.

Question: I have an 8 year old thoroughbred gelding. I got him from a thoroughbred rescue a few years ago, he was trained for racing but only ever had one start. I am doing lower level dressage and eventing with him. I board at a stable with about fifteen other horses and he is pastured with about five other geldings, and is alpha among them. He is not herd bound, in that he does not mind being ridden alone or separated from his group at all. He's a really nice, well behaved horse, and is progressing through his training well and always impresses me. I normally school him alone in the ring at home. His 'issue' presents itself when we ride with other horses. In schooling, or warm ups at shows, when another horse approaches us from the opposite direction, or passes closely, he spooks, kinda big. I have had him outside of a ring, just standing still, and he spooked when another horse walked over to us. He will usually do this three to five times each outing before he gets with the program and can pass like a normal horse. I just feel as though this behavior/reaction is kind of odd (not normal horse reaction) and was wondering if you had any insight as to what would cause this type of reaction. It's easily dealt with, just annoying, and sometimes the other horse will spook too because my horse spooked, and I don't want to ruin anyone's ride. Maybe if I knew why he was doing it I would be able to find a way for him to stop. Your insight is appreciated.

Answer: Sounds a little odd, since I always look to what people do to cause horse issues, my response would be you may be expecting it, you may be reacting internally and the horse knows it, so he reacts. You may be gathering up the reins, making sure you have a good seat, or just thinking, here it comes, get ready. So that is my first guess. Next, I think sometime people make a big deal out of things that are not so it becomes a big deal. I am sure it is not fun and may be a little annoying, but out of all the other bad things he could be doing, this is pretty minor. Also horse people (mainly women since that is most horse owners) tend to always be concerned about why? why this is happening is not as important how you can help the horse get better. So try and focus on that. I get tired of hearing, my horse was abused, my horse was treated bad by men, my horse was a rescue, my horse was screwed up bybla bla bla..... I can work with a horse and never know a thing about his past and do just fine. In fact, I think that is better so there are no preconceived expectations or negative opinions.

You got a good horse, no one has a perfect horse and when this goes away there will be something else showing up if you change your routine or expose the horse to something new.

I would ride and sit on this horse by every gate where horses come and go, I would sit on him by every arena where horses are being worked or jogging by or moving. I would sit in the middle of arena while other horses worked. What ever this is, "ride time" "exposure" will fix it. The more the horse is exposed to it, the more it will become normal, the more it will become routine, the more the horse will know what is going to happen before it happens since it happens all the time.

Also don't worry about ruining others ride, if you get on a horse, worry about your horse, not others, I did an article on "control your horse, not the world". The more you focus on your horse, the more your horse will focus on you. Another thing to do is when a horse approaches put your guy to work, have him flex both ways, have him take a step back, move his rear or move his front, this will put his focus on you and listening to you and then he may not have so much time on his hands to just worry about other horses approaching.

I don't think this is a horse issue and if I rode this horse, I don't think he would do this. When I get on a horse, I make sure the horse knows, his job is pay attention to me, not other things. Horses pick up on this and adapt very quickly.

QUESTION: Hello Rick, I read your response to the girl with the abused draft. I have the exact same problem with the exact same circumstance although I believe mine to be worse. I have been working with horses since I was a little girl and never had one I could not get right. This

horse is now 9, I have owned him for 4 years. when I first got him you could not even get near him without him lunging to bit or double barrel you. I was able to ride him, he was magnificent, he picks up his changes wonderful, very light on the mouth but after 2 weeks he just went bazerk. I put all of my ground work in, sacked him out, desensitized and also did alot of round pen work. He is wonderful in there but the second the saddle goes on, he is nuts. If I put 2 people in there he gets worse like he is ready for the fight but he is ok with just me. I mount and get off a hundred times, I bend him left to right, right to left over and over but I asked him to walk forward and up and over we went. I tried it again and now he just rears every time you go to mount so he learned yet another bad habit. He has not been ridden or messed with all summer because I was told by my husband if I go out there again to ride him he will be on the next trailer out. I feel he is out of my expertise at this time and do not know what else to do. Part of me says let him go but I am afraid of what will happen to him if I do and the other part of me does not want to fail this horse. What are your thoughts?

ANSWER: I answer many questions so I don't know what you referring to when you refer to another questions. It sounds like this horse is flipping over when you ride him and since he has done this and it gets him release, he has been taught to do it more and better. This happens all the time when people want to try with a horse and then teach bad lessons. You said you owned him for four years and now this problem, that tells me you or whoever else worked the horse caused it and taught it. Moot point now the horse knows it and is now dangerous. I am with your husband, don't ride him. This can be fixed but not by you or by me over email.

My thoughts are you have a few choices. My first option is you taught it, your problem, your responsibility, so getting rid of the horse is BS in my book since that is what most people do after they teach a horse to be dangerous and then the horse suffers or is killed, but the person who caused it gets a free pass since they get rid of the horse.

So, you can make this horse a good pasture buddy and ground horse, you can try and teach it to pull and make it a pulling or carriage horse. You can pay someone who is willing to take the risk and re-train it, this can be fixed but if someone tries and does not know what they are doing, they will get hurt, not your problem, just make sure you tell them so they know what they are getting into and can't come back on you and say "she did not tell me". I would have them sign an agreement so you have proof they know.

You can find the horse a good pasture home where he can retire or be a pasture mate for some other horse if you don't want to keep him.

Emails like yours get old, since I see them everyday. I got a horse now it is dangerous, what do I do? Horses are never born bad or mean - they are made. The fact that people don't mean to do what they do does not help a horse that is sentenced to life of misery, beatings or bad homes until he is killed. I don't have much sympathy for people that do this to horses and want some nice kind answer from me. In the end "the horse" always pays and that gets me fired up.

So I don't know you, sure you mean well, may be a great sweet person that everyone loves. You have a horse that is now doing something that jeopardizes HIS life and he was not doing this before or you did not know it until 4 years. Yes I know the horse was abuse, I am sure he may have taught this before, you may believe you did not teach this or contribute to this in any way, none of which changes anything for this horse.

So you can do what I think is the right thing and keep the horse or find it a good pasture home. Or invest time and money to try and fix it.

That is my thoughts.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Rick, I think you got my story correct but also wrong. This horse was purchased from a sale by a horse trader friend of mine. He was very mean, no one wanted him. The guy called me because I had turned some horses out for him in the past and thought I could handle him. I got on him and rode him and decided that he was something that I could work with, he was about 4 or 5. I thought Frank had had him for a few months, turned out he just got him 2 days ago. I did not want to see him go back to a sale. The next time I got on him he

was worse, so I put in the ground work in. I gave him the time he needed to trust me. I went to get on him after ground work was finished then he came up and over. I did not cause the problem, I found it. I have kept him for 4 years afraid to give him to someone else. Sorry if you misunderstood me. I am not an expert but know enough not to start something that I cannot finish or to teach a horse a bad behavior. When you get a horse from a sale, the true personality takes a week or so to come out I think mostly because they are scared and nervous. He is a 17hh TB who hates men and only likes me. I earned his trust and deserve it. I have had trainers come out who will not get on him. I hear there are no untrainable horses but I beg to differ on this one. If I could find someone willing to help him be a horse again I would give him to them because he is an athlete. 10 mover! He is a beautiful black and white paint who just needs more than I know how to do. Thanks for the input though.

ANSWER: I am still confused, if you kept him for four years, why NOW? It sounds like you rode him twice and then let him sit for 4 years, why the new need to fix this.

As for you saying you did not cause it, I still don't believe that. My guess is this horse has never flipped back when no one was on him. Therefore by you getting on him, you did cause it. You did not prevent it. You did not teach the horse not to do it. All of this means you caused. I know self protection comes in and sometime you have to forget the lesson and just survive.

Your statement about hating men, in my opinion is bs, I have worked with many horses who "don't like men" and they liked me fine and worked great for me.

I am not sure where you are located or what your funds are like, but I would bet if I worked this horse he would so called "like me". I don't believe horses associate sex with learning. They like other horses or people who understand or work with horse like a horse. My guess is the men that have been around this horse do not know or understand horses well and this horse knew it. I have never had a horse not work with me. It may take some time but every horse comes around if they know you know.

If I worked with this horse I would try and make him not want to flip over, that would probably force me to have him try and maybe actually flip over, at the point I would make this horse dislike flipping over. I did now see you ride, but MOST EVERYONE on a horse that rears, pulls on the reins for balance and safety and end up pulling a horse over on them. Horses do not like flipping over, it hurts them and they are not able to run and defend themselves. I would make sure the horse realized this and make him NOT want to flip over. You don't have to be on him to do this. You strap a couple of tires on the saddle, you can tie a feed bad that is heavy on the saddle, you can lots of things to get this horse to learn that flipping over only gets him grief and bad times, but it can be dangerous for the horse, but he has to learn that flipping is not acceptable and if you make him scared to do it, great, if you make him worried about doing, so what. You can tie him high with a good rope halter where he can't flip over if he ties, you can have him so controlled on the ground and so responsive to the lunge rope, that you can pressure him to rear and then make him run, make him learn that when he front feet leave the ground he gets hard fast pressure. If he lets you get on and off "100 times" as you say, it makes me think he does not know the forward command or forward cue, so he rears out of confusion. Your explanation is less that specific, is he rearing from fear, from resistance, from confusion, does he warn, does he rear a few times before going over, does he back up first, does he know how to back up, did he have a bit, were you wearing spurs, what did you do, did you pull on one rein or one rein, did he fall straight back or to the side, did you pull his head to the side, did you jump off, did you stay on, did he land on you, where were when he hit, what did you do after wards, only about a 100 questions that I don't know and each one could change the answer. If I emailed my doctor and said I was in a wreck and got hurt can you help me, my doctor would not have a clue. The fact that you don't realize this, tells me you don't know as much about horses as you tell me you know. Another factor is I see things differently than other people, you could have ten good horsemen watch a horse wreck and probably each one would describe it differently and would see different things and see different causes and see different fixes. Some or all may be right or wrong. Just another reason that not a lot of people do this and try and help, it is frustrating to the questioner and the person trying to help.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: ok, maybe I did not explain myself right because you are saying things that I

already know. When I acquired the horse, he was a wreck, he allowed me to ride him and he was ok but strong and very spooky, he did seem as though he had been cowboy broke to me. He did some bucking and then did some rearing so I took him back to basics. If he heard a man's voice or a man or another woman came near me while I was working with him, he would strike. I am sure you could work with him, he will trust anyone I think that puts the time in. I am just the only one who has given him the time so far. As far as me pulling on the reins when he goes up, that did not happen. I gave him his head completely. He started to twist and I knew we were in trouble. I let him sit and figured he needed a little more play time and ground work. Started back to the beginning with sacking him out, then lunging with the saddle, then the saddle and bridle, let him put himself on the bit, desensitizing with the saddle, I did some liberty work with him as well, got him to change directions on cue with just moving my hands. He is great with all of that. I then mount and dismount without having him move at all, took my time then tried to get him to move forward with just a click and light leg and up he went. I have a very light hand. I then say to myself well maybe he just needs more time. I give him a break then start over again. I have restarted this horse every spring since I got him and am getting no where. I have 3 other horses that I rescued and they are all fine. (by the way, that is what I do, I rescue horse, I have rescued 13 in the past 2 yrs and got them healthy then gave them to suitable homes) Maybe it is me... but I have trained x race horses from the track, problem horses in the past and started 2 yr olds with no problem that did not even so much as buck after my ground work. I dont understand this guy. I am not saying I am an expert, I sure made my share of mistakes but not on this guy. I gave him a chance that no one else would. I have had trainers come out here and tell me that he is completely right handed, scared of his own shadow and that I should get not ride him or let anyone else. I should send him out to Perelli or Anderson. I have kept him because of the way he is and was afraid of what someone else might do to him. I do not need you to respond to this, I just wanted to explain the situation in full because I obviously did not explain it correctly the first two times. Answer:OK, first this is not about you or me being an expert. This is about a horse that has been screwed up by people and needs help. As far as other horses, that does not matter either. I have worked lots of horses and could get killed tomorrow by a horse. I tell people all the time, the horse will tell you if you know what you are doing. This horse is telling you, that you don't know. It is not personal, it just is. You say maybe it is your fault, I assure you something is your fault, when something goes wrong when I am handling a horse, I assure you it is my fault. Knowing and accepting that is first step to growing and progressing your horsemanship. Looking for others to blame or horses to blame is a sure way never to grow, plenty of those types out there. So, I still this as part you. You say you rode him, he allowed you to ride him and he appeared cowboy broke. So that tells me the horse did not rear and flip over until you started your training program. Since I assume that you said he let you ride him, which means he did go forward and move, without flipping back. Each time you tell me he did something, you said you stopped and went back to ground work, that tells me that the horse learned by rearing, you would not ride him. You also said when you rode him he would strike at other people that came up to you, again this tells me you were riding him and he was not flipping over, which brings me back to this was taught and learned, since he did not do in your first rides. If you are too worried about this not being you, you did not do it, it is not your fault, you cannot change what you, you do not know what you do, therefore you do the same thing and the horse does the same thing. If you want change from your horse, YOU need to change, if you are so convinced that you do nothing wrong, then how can you change, in your mind there is nothing to change. I can't help people that are dead set on being right or set on nothing they did ever causes anything bad. From your three emails, you continue to take that position. You say you don't understand this guy, he is a horse, he is saying the same thing about you, he does not understand you, he says it the only way he can, you say it with words. You are not seeing this as a YOU issue, you keeping wanting to make this a horse that was abused, a horse that hates men, a horse that can't learn since you did everything right and did not cause any of this. You are not seeing this as this horse sees it, you see as you see it. That is not horsemanship.

Nothing you have told me is new, nothing you said is unique, all horses will do and have done what you are explaining. This horse is trying to tell you something and you are too busy, being good at ground work, good at breaking other horses, good at starting 2 yr olds, good at rescuing other horses, and this horse is screaming that you are not that good, you need to try something different, he needs your help in other ways than you have tried, so you, being human, with pride ego and knowledge, want to look everywhere for an answer except to yourself and this horse. This horse will teach you if you stop and listen. You may be too busy, you may not have the time or patience, whatever the reason, it does not sound like you are committed to helping this horse fix this, you may be good at giving him a home, food and good

ground work, but that is not what this horse needs. He sounds like a project and if you don't have the time then fighting it or trying something every six month or every year is not fair. You say the horse is scared of his own shadow, that tells me the horse feels insecure, he does not have a leader, he is not being given direction, he is not being taught to deal with his fear. You say you were told he is right handed (I think you are referring to right brained/reactionary) and not left brained logic and thinking. So what, all horses are right brained that is how they are born and survive in the wild, they have to be taught how to think and use their left brain, they have to be shown how to not react instinctively so they can learn. Once again when people want to point and tell me all the problems with a horse it tells me that they do not understand horses and they do not know as much as they think.

There is much more about horses that I don't know than I know. I say that and other good horsemen understand that and know what I mean. Others, who don't know horses, hear that and think well why are you giving advice, why are you passing yourself off as an expert, you must not know much. I often ask people to rate them self between one and ten, with ten being the highest, as to their knowledge of horses. Most everyone I ask, rate them self as a 8 or 9. Then they ask me, what do you rate yourself at and I say a 3 or 4. Then I get the look like I have two heads.

Horsemanship is about the horse, not you or me. So you say you should send this horse to Parelli or Clint, I would guess they get offers of untrainable horses every day. Since you find homes for other horses, let this horse be a horse and find him a good home. You gave me some information but you did not answer one important question. Why the long break, why four years and now this needs to be fixed, what else is going on and why would you expect some new change after your four year ownership?

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

Misc Answers on Varied Topics:

Question: I read your last answer about using a bosal instead of a snaffle and found it very informative. I am not a horse trainer. I understand why you don't answer many questions anymore and respect that, and won't get nasty if you decide not to answer this one. I know someone who has a young filly who is not trained, a three 1/2 year old that is very strong willed and throwing her head when she tries to lead and teach her ground manners. She has hired a trainer that is using a metal bosal on her which she says helps. But, she also mentioned that the filly responded to bathing and grooming very positively by the trainer as well. Other than your article, I saw several blogs and comments of people that said that metal bosals can damage and scar a horse if not used with care and in experienced hands. Is a metal bosal necessary at all? Thanks regardless of the answer.

Answer: Absolutely no reason to use a metal bosal and anyone that does is not a horseman. If I wrap barbed wire about a horse's head I could control most any horse, that does make anything but an A**. What is being described as strong willed is nothing more than a young horse that has not been taught or handled properly. On my bad horsemanship page of my site I discuss many stupid practices such as this and they are all cruel in my book.

Not sure how you can help this situation, but your instinct are right to me. Anything can scar or damage a horse, the old saying, any bit is only as painful or aggressive as the hands that hold it. The problem with this is people think they are soft and not hurting, they are wrong. If I have rely on any pain device to control a horse I should not be riding that horse.

This so called trainer is someone who does not understand this and knows that when all else fails you can hurt and pain a horse into submission, so those who don't know or understand horses use these stupid devices.

I have taken many horses out of bits, shanks and all kind of crazy things and the horses do just fine and much better in just a simple rope halter. Horses are fear animals, so when you add pain you justify the fear and only make learning impossible for the horse.

Would a dancer have any beauty if you had to use a whip or spurs to get them to dance? The problem is this trainer does not know, the owner does not know and now the horse has to pay.

"In the land of the blind, the man with one eye is king". Many horse people are blind of knowledge, so anyone that comes long with one eye is suddenly king.

Not sure if this helps, unless you can take this horse from it's current situation.

Question: I recently acquired a 13yr old pony, who was once broke but was left for pasture for 2yrs. I have been working with him for 2 months. I am sure the past owners never lunged him because he was scared of it. I put away the whip, he was also scared of it. I have him lunging for about 1/2 both ways and he is starting to respond with walk, trot, ho only a occasionally he tries to take me for a run which he does not get away with. I have a 7yr old that rides him. He rides well when I am by him but as soon as I back away he runs as fast as he can back to his barn. Now she is scared, he is scared. She tried to stop him but could not. Is a riding pasture or circle my only option? or should I just have him follow me around the yard as I am doing now?? Thank you for your help.

ANSWER: You should learn more about horses before this horse hurts your child and you. You say the horse was broke? says who? the person that wanted you to buy it? A pony is the most neglected horse out there. Read my website, I have lot of examples on many things that you don't see right now.

A child on a pony is normally an accident looking for a place to happen. Take the time and read my site completely, it will help you see things differently.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: This pony I have been around for 10yrs. He was ridden by 3 girls all the time and then they grew up and left him in his pasture until I took him.

I have read and will keep reading. Your answer certainly doesn't give me any advice to proceed forward, reading which I continue to do and patiently trying to spend time with this pony. My daughter wears a helmet an we try to spend 1-2hrs a day with him with caring patience with discipline. I was only looking for advice on riding arena maybe a better option but all you seem to wanna do is discourage us.

Answer: I do not want to discourage you, I don't want to try and give you advice when I don't know what is going on. You, like others, always want to fire back with additional info that I somehow should have know. I am not a mind reader. From what you wrote(that is all I have to go on) I gave you my advice. From that you want to blame me for discouraging you. This proves my point and is probably exactly why you are having problems with this pony.

You write me a 6 sentence question and expect me to come up with some fix for problems that you have,your child has,this pony has and since I don't tell you some feel good answer, NOW, I am discouraging you.

Whatever, here you go, here is my new answer and should have been my first answer. Without seeing the horse or you, I cannot properly give you reasonable advise. I suggest you hire a local trainer who more qualified to help.

Ok, feel better, I hope that is more 'encouraging'.

Question: Hi- I have a 5 yr old qh gelding. He is very social, and yet when getting him out in the open, he gets testy. I roundpen him first trying to get the energy out-he does not do much in the paddock. He is alone, but has neighboring buddies, occassionally they will run, but my horse is on the lazy side. In the round pen he does quite well, knowing walk,trot, canter(sometimes hard to get into-and may buck) and whoa. When I get him out in the open, including out in the 40 acre field, he gets some energy bursts, and will get testy. He may put his head down as far as possible, and you have to pull to get it up, then he gets fiesty. If you try to get him to canter, he may buck. A trainer can push him right out of it, is firm, but she says he is a good horse-not mean-just playful and testy. His health, teeth, and equipment have been checked, and are good. He was ridden in a full cheek snaffle-even with curb chain, and I needed more control out in the open. Now we are going to try a mild curb, with shanks that move around. I cannot figure him out. WE have taken him out thru the heavy woods, and he goes over, branches, small logs etc, fine. I have had tree branches with leaves I put all over his body, while he trys to eat the leaves, have had a colorful large umbrella over him-no problem-he just lowers his head, and rests, has gone over tarps fine, etc. But he frustrates

me with his antics. The trainer says when you make him work, he gets ticky, and you have to make him do it. I ordered him smart calm ultra in hopes of leveling out his moods. He may just act up-prancy at times-for no apparent good reason. To trainer also, and she is firm, and has no fear. He gets mainly hay, and 1/2# safechoice morning and night. I am getting frustrated, as I want a solid level headed horse I can trust. He seems to have 2 different personalities. I know he likes variety, and he gets it. I hope he will out grow, what I think is immaturity, and I hope with this supplement he will focus on us better. I only had him about 7 months, and I couldn't do much with him at all, at our old stable-as the pasture buddies were very aggressive, and he came to the new stable in June with many marks. We had to wait on a waiting list to move. His body has recovered from that per checkup, but it has only been since the summer he has really been worked. He is a very social horse always comes to meet me, great in stall, curious, but the other personality, gets me frustrated. I am told he is smart, but as I said he even is a little testy to the trainer. thankyou.

Answer:I am just shaking my head reading your question. Partly for the horse and partly for you. Obviously you have not read my web site or any of my other answers. If I had to explain what most people think, that do not have a clue about horses, it would be this email. You addressed everything from food, location, other horses, trainers, stalls, supplements, called the horse names like testy/has different personalities/lazy/feisty/antics/immature, you are blaming the horse for most all the issues and now you are going to a more painful bit that hurts the horse more with less pressure from you and your hands.

If I did not know better I would swear that your email is from someone that knows me and it was written as a joke to get me riled up.

Tact is not my strong suit, so I call it like I see. You are not paying me and you asked. You do not have a clue about a horse. You are doing just about everything in the world that I think is wrong. You are paying a trainer to try and train your horse when you should be training yourself. You are the problem not this horse. You and this horse are destined to fail if you do not accept this.

You admitted that your trainer is firm and fearless, that tells me that you are NOT firm and you are scared, both teach a horse to be dangerous. Your trainer is using nice words and making it sound nice as to not hurt your feelings. I think she is doing you and the horse a disservice. I see this all too often. People like me who are more direct, rude, mean, up front, or whatever you or others want to call it, do not make friends or have lots of people that want to pay someone to tell them they are doing stupid dangerous things that will likely get them hurt, or of more concern to me, get a horse hurt. I make it clear I do what I do for the horse, not money and not for people. Most trainers I see, mainly women, will be their clients friend, will talk and spend time laughing and handing out all the time taking money for months and years from people that don't have a clue about horses.

There is one lady at a previous barn that bought a horse that she was scared of, the horse was broke and was ridden before, yet this person paid for lessons every week for over two years and never rode or got on this horse. But her and her trainer "liked" each other, they went slow, they hugged after each lesson, laughed and cried together. Meanwhile the horse never respected either and was confused and frustrated all the time.

Read my site, read my articles, watch the training videos and learn "the horse". Once you figure out you are the problem, then you will start to grow with this horse and stop trying to fix this horse. Your horse is just a horse and that is all he knows how to be. I cannot teach a life time of horse knowledge in one email. My site is long and it only scratches the surface of a horse. I really hope you read my site for your horse's sake.

QUESTION: I have been training an Arabian gelding for about a year now. He will be 4 in Feb. The very first time I got on, I was over confident and got bucked off. He did not try it again for several rides, but when he did, I came off a second time. I have ridden him several more times, (without coming off again, yet) but I am concerned about pushing him too fast, and causing another blow-up (next time, I might get hurt!)At the same time, I wonder if I am being too soft on him, and going too slowly.

so here are the particulars:
the first ride, I used a mounting block. I had my (in-experienced) boyfriend holding the lead

rope. (my first mistake) Once in the saddle, I realized I was wearing my tennis shoes instead of boots (second mistake) I decided not to put my feet in the stirrups (third mistake) then changed my mind (fourth mistake) and bent forward- while the boyfriend was leading the horse at a walk- to adjust the stirrups. Couldn't quite find the stirrup, and kicked the horse in the process, and of course, he bucked. Tipped forward like that, I never had a chance. My boyfriend dislocated a finger trying to hold on.

Before you get the wrong impression of me, I have been riding for nearly 30 years and even have a degree in Horsemanship. In all those years, I can only count the number of times I have been bucked off on one hand, and I have never been bucked off a green horse in training before! I knew I was making all of the mistakes above, as I made them- as I said, I was over confident.

OK, second incident: Everything was going smooth as silk. I had ridden the horse several times in the round pen, and once or twice in the pasture. I was in the pasture, and was able to encourage him gently into the trot for the first time. Made a smooth transition back down to the walk, and decided that was a good note to end on. As I turned back to the barn, the horse's sister called out to him. He picked the trot back up, and I gently used my hand and seat to say "no trotting towards the barn". He didn't like that, and bucked. I hung on for several bucks, and attempted to pull his head up with one rein. But he was so strong, I was unable to bend his neck, and finally came off. (Wound up with serious rope burn!)

So the (above) second incident was about 3 months ago, and we are still just walking. Part of the reason for this is my own apprehension- I don't want to get hurt. But part of it is the horse does tend to have an emotional outburst if he feels I am pushing him. We do lots of ground work: round pen where he will follow me like a puppy, lunging, some ground driving as well as just walking around on the lead line and working on lateral movements as well as backing. He will back, turn on the forehand and leg yield with me in the saddle, as well. I have been making sure that his sister is visible when ever I ride, for fear of her calling to him again. It is my gut belief that his bond with his half sister (they are only 4 days apart) is my underlying problem. Even though he seems to accept my dominance, he has what I see as an unhealthy bond with her, always checking to see where she is. I do not have the facilities to completely separate them, nor do I want to "get rid" of either animal.

So there are a couple of questions here: am I taking it too slow? How could I decrease his separation anxiety? The bridle I am using is a bitless nylon "side-pull" (he has carried a bit, but does not do well with it). Is there another piece of equipment (a bosal, perhaps) which may give me more leverage when trying to bend his neck during a buck?

Feel free to take your time answering- I am not opposed to just walking and lunging for the next several weeks! And if you want more info, I promise to not be so wordy in my next communication to you! Thank You!!

ANSWER: lol, not at your bucking but at your explanation. I think I am the Gordon Ramsey or Simon Cowell of the horse world. If you know these people you know they piss people off with their honesty and no pulling punches style of giving feedback. So grab a chair and hang on.

OK, first incident, you could not have done more wrong if tried (maybe?). You did not think it out, you got in a hurry, you were lazy and you took shortcuts instead of taking the time it takes and you set the horse up to fail and he went right were you led him. So admitting this if great, but the damage you did was so huge that I don't think you get it. Your actions taught this horse he can get you off, now you make him smarter, you taught him something that he did not know before you did what you did. So fine and dandy that you know what you did, and fine that you know it was your fault, and fine that you are not blaming the horse, but NOT fine that you taught this horse a dangerous lesson and now your have to go so far back and try and un-teach this. Much harder than just doing it right the first time. Having your inexperienced boyfriend hold the rope was the least of your problems. So knowing you were wrong is not near as good as not doing something that you know is wrong. BTW, giving me your resume means nothing to me or the horse, if you were as good and have as much good experience as you say, you would not have done what you did and would not be in the situation you are in now. A good horseman/horsewoman will not tell you what they know, they can show you. You showed this horse, and maybe yourself, that you are not as good as you may have thought.

Second incident: This has nothing to do with his sister. Let me say that again, it had nothing to

do with her, or the wind, or the pasture, or the barn, or the grass blowing.....it is YOU. It sounds like you want to explain away what happens so it does not have to be you. Sorry, it is you. You did bad so the horse did bad, you set the horse up to fail and he did.

If you have read any of my answers or my site, you would know blaming the other horse or making excuses on why this happen means nothing. What matters is what the horse learned and what you taught the horse. On the first "incident" (your training session) you taught the horse you were not a good leader, you let someone without confidence try and lead and control him, you taught him that he did not have to let you ride or sit on him, you taught him that he is stronger than you and the guy holding him, you taught him that he can get you off when he wants, you taught him not to trust you, you taught him that you are not a smarter or strong leader and that he should not put his life in your hands. And that is just some of what this horse learned by your hand. In the second "incident" (bad training lesson) you taught the horse that it does not have to listen to you, it can run when it wants to and you can't stop him, you taught him (in case he did not learn it the first time) that he can get you off when he wants, that you can't control him when you are on his back and that you are not a strong leader that he should trust. (no boyfriend factor in this incident - tell him that since I am pretty sure he got some of the blame in the first incident) :)

NOW to what you learned, since I think I made it clear what the horse learned. If you think this is bits, barns, sisters, boyfriends, shoes, separation anxiety or whatever else, then you learned nothing. What you should have learned is you did not do many things right, you did things wrong, you did not set this horse up to succeed and that this horse is not going to let someone, that does not know, lead him (you). He is a smart boy that will teach you more than all the other horses put together, if you don't let him kill you first.

It seems by your questions that you are NOW, worried about getting hurt(and your actions have made it more likely that you will be hurt). A little late and now the horse knows it, not good. It sounds like you are going too slow now and being over cautious and the horse knows. You need to understand horses better. I say this since your explanation tells me that you don't understand horses.

Read my horsemanship page and a few of my articles and review the answers (on the question and answer page about bucking) so you have some foundation on where I come from and where horses come from.

If you are still confused on what to do next, write me back and I give you a few things. Unless you understand how me and the horse see things, you cannot apply what I would tell you, effectively.

Go do some reading and get back to me. (go give your horse a carrot and tell him thanks for the lesson, he just made you better, in case you did not know it)

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Rick,

I have read the site (before I wrote the first question) so yes: I am unsure of what to do next and would appreciate some suggestions.

(I don't blame the horse, I don't blame the boyfriend not then, not now: he is still perfect, I blame me, just as you do. Sorry if I did not make that clear in the first place... so how can I save/fix the relationship with the horse?)

Answer: I don't know, I only know what I read in your question. I do not think you have read my site or your question would not say what it does. But if I am wrong, then you did not get what I say in my site so not worth explaining it again.

Good luck,

Question: Hi, my question is a simple question. I went to the website and i couldn't find it. I've been trying to figure out what kind of horse do I have. He is grey and has like little dots (can't

explain it they're like light brown/yellowish little dots) Any little help that you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

Answer: Yea, you won't find much on breeds on my site. I would say you have an official horse and that is about as close as I can get. It could be part anything, I don't see any strong specific breed jumping out at me, but I am not into breeds, bloodline and stuff so not the best person to ask on this. I am firm believer that a good never comes in a bad color or bad breed. His head could be little mustang, the spots could be the start of what some call flee bitten and may be more as he gets older. Horses commonly change coat, color, spots, so no telling, younger horses change more that older.

I did notice the web halter (yuck) and the buckle on the lead rope (not good), but the horse looks great to me. A little shorter back than some like, I like short backs. Even Mustangs caught and branded are not really a breed since many let many different types of horses go so cross breeding is common.

My comments about the halter and rope will make sense if you read my rope halter page.

sorry can't be more help,

Rick

Question: I have a question about my horse Chief. I have been riding for a very long time so I am pretty knowledgeable about horses, but he confuses me. He will not turn! He will turn at the walk, but at the trot or canter he will just plow on, and no matter how much I use leg aids, kick, and pull on the reins, he won't listen. He also has issues with respect. Every time I try to wash him, he walks into me instead of backing up like most horses I have worked with, which is dangerous to me and everyone else that tries to work with him. I have done numerous exercises on him but am at a dead end. Please help? Thanks,
Magenta

Answer: You did not tell me how long you owned this horse and how long have you been riding him. What ever you are doing is either causing it, not preventing it and allowing the horse to do this is only teaching him that he can do it. Do some One rein riding so you learn to control the horse without a bit, pain or fear, then ride the horse in a small area, best if you have a round pen. You have to teach the horse what you want and then show the horse how to give it to you.

I have a video on one rein riding. Read my horsemanship page on my web site.

Rick

Question: My daughter has a 16 year old thorbred mare that is the love of her life. She does high school rodeo with her. we have had her for 3 yrs now and she still wants to run past the end pole when she does this event. We have been to clinics, changed tack and most recent I sent her to horsemanship training for 3 days. She works with this mare religously 3-5 days a week. She has made the changes that the trainer showed her and works on them daily. We spend hours working on this and have yet to come up with the right formula to make this work. Slow work is fine the problem is when she lets her run. The horse is very well behaved and is a easy keeper her disposition is outstanding and she is very smart. She is also used to barrel race too. Any help here would be greatly appreciated.

Answer: You answered this question by asking it. There is a saying that goes "practice does not make perfect, only perfect practice makes perfect". All the work in the world will not work if it is done incorrectly. You explain this as if you think I can explain it to you and you can explain it to your daughter. That does not work with horses. They are too observant and smart and they know if you know so if you try and trick or try some gimmick or some special thing, a horse will always know, if you know if you don't.

This horse knows your daughter does not know. How can you think I could somehow tell you something over an email, when people who can see the horse and your daughter and know

100 times more info than me, cannot fix this. I understand you are lost, I know you are looking and trying, but a horse does not care about any of that.

Your daughter is not a horseman/horsewoman, she in it to win. She uses her horse to go faster and win. There is never much horsemanship in most horse sports and time and awards is a horse's worst enemy.

This horse has learned what it does since it was taught this by your daughter for the past three years. You will not find anyone who can fix what you are seeing as a problem. I see a poor horse that is being used, confused and pushed by a young child that has no idea about understanding a horse and enjoying the partnership and relationship of a horse. I am not saying your daughter is mean or bad, just that she is where most kids are at, at that age and sometimes this is caused by over zealous parents who push competitiveness too much and then the child is forced to do what they do and then the horse is forced to do what it does.

If I had a race horse that raced every few days on a track for three years and all this horse knows is to run as fast as it can around a track with a jockey on top hitting him and yelling to make it go faster, and then I suddenly wanted to teach that horse to go slow, stop, turn and pay attention to me, this would not happen overnight, it would happen if I continued to do the same thing and it would happen if I did not understand horses.

This could be fixed but it would require more work and time working on what you want and less time doing what it has been doing. And I can't control either one of those, so I don't think I can help this horse.

Question:QUESTION: Hi Rick,

I hope you can help us with this. We rescued a saddlebred mare who was destined to slaughter. She is 22 years old but in great shape for age. She had been a show horse and then sold to the Amish. She seems petrified most of the time. She clacks her teeth in submission when we put her halter on. She literally shakes in fear when the farrier and vet come out and seems to shut down with a glazed look in her eyes. Is there anything we can do to help her overcome whatever must have happened to her. She is a pasture companion we don't intend to use her for anything else but we'd like for her to enjoy the rest of her life at least.

ANSWER: Unfortunately this story is told too often. The more I work with horse from Amish the more I am convinced they are the cruelest and worst horseman in the world.

Glad you are going to give this horse a good home. Time will heal and fix this. This horse has learned to fear and submit to humans in a slave and master relationship. It will take time but it will happen. Spend time with this horse, reading a book, sitting in with her, grooming, giving carrots and treats. Don't require much of her until she begins to trust, but be aware that if she starts to get bossy, pushy or threatening, you will have to be firm and make her move her feet, but don't over do it.

The more time you spend just hanging out and not requiring anything, she will start to relax and trust. So pick her feet, rub her, give her treats, stand next to her and be near her, she will forgive. Horses are really good at forgiving and trusting, that is why they are abused so often.

That glazed look you describe is fear, nervousness and insecurity caused by stupid a** people that think the only way to train or handle a horse is with brute force and fear (AKA Amish).

When you say pasture companion, I hope you have a second horse, this horse really needs to be with another horse, to bond, trust, herd up and feel safe.

Hope this helps,

QUESTION: Hey Rick- I just wrote to you about my yearling kicking. I was just now looking around the internet again and found your response to the person with the kicking feeding problem. It would have been entertaining if I didn't know that I was the dum dum in this senario. Well, I'm thinking while I read it, oooh, that's me going to get my fool head kicked off and I don't mind admitting I am an idiot when it comes to this. I have no experience training a young horse- obviously- but I do know a few things. One is that she doesn't respect me,

another is that I don't think beating her with a stick is a very good option, but you are right, it is a very dangerous situation. Please do tell me what would you do- a young horse is frightened and wants back in the pasture with mama and tries to whirl around and kick you? It is very scary to me- although I did hold on, twice, and for discipline, had no stick but snapped her halter and backed her up- not so much but didn't know what else to do as the storm was literally coming in. How would you go about getting a yearling to respect and admire you? My dogs are very well trained, the mare responds to me well, this is a totally new area for me. Thanks again!

ANSWER: Well, you got me on this one, most people ignore what I tell them and tell me how it is not them and it is the horse after they read my answer. You are asking me another question before I answer your first question.

Please allow me to answer your questions first so then you can ignore it. lol :)

only kidding, but some truth in it.

As I just answered your first questions, read it, try and understand it and read my site, articles and other info so you can better understand horses, so you can get better. If you stop concentrating on how good your dogs are and how you had horses before and how...bla bla bla....

None of that matters to a horse. As soon as you admit that you are the problem, you don't know as much as you think you know, especially about horses, then you can be open to learn from the horse. The horse is best teacher of the horse.

I often ask people I work with to rate their horse knowledge from a one to ten, one knowing very little and 10 knowing a lot and most everything. Most people rate themselves at a 7 or 8. Some of these people, the smarter ones, ask me where do I rate myself on the that scale. And my answer always gets me looks like I have two heads. I rate myself at a 3 or 4. Some say well shit I am higher than that, why am I asking you for help. Others realize that if I am as good as I am with horses and I am only a 3 or 4, there must be a whole lot to know and learn. Those people I can work with, the first group, most people who think they are eights, will get hurt, will buy and sell horses, will blame horses, will get horses hurt, will pay trainers, will end up getting out of horse or will have nothing but a frustrating life always fighting, training, trying and failing with horses.

You have a choices on every path, a horse does not. They are stuck where they are and who they are with. Which is why, "it is never the horse's fault".

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Hey Rick- Thank you so much for answering. I should have waited for a response the first time- you're right, but I honestly didn't think you would write back since you were a little peeved at people's questions. I did read off your website and learned a ton. Listen, I have no problem knowing I'm like a zero or one with training a young horse. I've probably graduated to a one. I do watch my ego and try to not let it get in the way- I am frustrated because I want to do a good job and not get hurt and I feel like I should know what to do, but I don't. That first kick was bad, I had owned her for 5 minutes at that point and I almost got sent to the hospital. I guess I had hoped that she forgot, but no such luck. I think I can learn and I think I can do it. The mom horse is not such a good teacher because the baby actually pushes her out of the way. I spend a lot of time pushing the baby out of my way. No more carrots. No more in my space at all. Hips away from me. Feet moving. Trying to get the baby in with a different mare who will be more bossy. Okay, yes, I wish there was a magic potion, and you could tell me exactly what to do, but mostly I wanted to thank you for taking your time to answer me.

Answer: No need to thank me, do right by your horse. Read you last response you wrote again. Horses are a mindset. All the answers and problems come from us and what we do. Your last response still is seeing this as the mom is not a good leader since she lets her horse push (I assure you no human is better at being a horse, than a horse), it does not matter how mom treats the young one, it only matters what YOU do. You say you are frustrated, I assure you that your horse is more frustrated. You say that you are looking for a more bossy mare for

the young one, it does not matter what another horse does with that colt, it only matters what YOU do. YOU YOU YOU, this is why horses make us better. They challenge us, they identify our weakness and force us to work on them, they test us, they make sure we are on our A game all the time and if we are not they let us know. STOP looking for other reasons for this horse's behavior, it is not the mom, it is not another horse, it is not what someone else did, it is not from neglect.....

It is you and when you get better, your horse will get better. If I or another good horseman handled this horse, you would see a different horse. All horses are just horses, since the day they are born. A bad horse is never born it is made... by people that don't know.

You don't know it yet but this horse is going to teach you more about horses (and yourself) than any person every could, but you have to listen and be willing and stop trying to make it about something else. It is just you and this horse, and if the horse fails you failed, if the horse is good then you are good, a horse is only the reflection of the person handling it. It is not easy and it is not fast, it is hard work with NO short cuts. Once you accept this the frustration will turn into joy of learning and being taught and in the presence of one of the greatest animals on the earth.

If it was easy everyone would be good at it.

QUESTION: Hi Rick- I have a Hanov./Tb 11 yr old mare. We've been spending the past 2 years I've owned her undoing her previous owner's damage. She's a very sensitive mare and has no problem moving forward and was basically rushed through her training to jump as high as she could as fast as possible. She was trained as a jumper/dressage horse. I am currently eventing with her and with time and patience, she's become an excellent partner. She has solid 2nd level dressage training. But her previous owner skipped a lot of steps in her training. She is very good on the lunge but I have one problem that I need help figuring out. First off she is petrified of the dressage whip. Since she is very sensitive I can do most everything with just a slight movement of my hand and slight movements of the end of the lunge line to cue her to move forward, but if I ever try to use a lunge whip, or even have one in my hand while lunging, she takes off thinking she's supposed to run as fast as she can in a circle. The minute I drop it, she settles. As you can guess, not being able to use the whip is limiting my lunging. One problem I have is getting her to move out on the circle. She tends to fall in from time to time creating slack in the lunge line. But if I point at her shoulder with even my hand to move out, she thinks I'm asking her to go and she speeds up. I can't even get to that point with a whip in hand. So I guess what I'm asking is, how do I get her over her fear of the whip, and how do I teach her to move out on the circle and that the whip doesn't always mean speed up?

ANSWER: First, I do not use a whip to lunge a horse, I don't promote it, think it is needed and think too many people use since they do not know what they are doing. Your horse has these issues for that very reason. She was chased with a whip (called it lunging) and now has learned that a whip means I run or I get hit, chased or whipped.

This is not a whip issue, not a horse issue, -- yep you guessed it, it is a you issue. You using the fear of the whip as an excuse since you don't understand what your horse is telling you. Your horse is screaming to you and since you don't hear her, are not listening, don't understand her, you are seeing this as an abuse issue, prior bad training issue. I could get this horse to ignore the whip in about 20 mins. So you are thinking, then just tell me what to do so I can do it. It is not that simple and can't be done. YOU have learn to think and understand horses in order to be able to fix this. I can teach you that in an email. The fact that you and others write me questions and expect and think that I can someone how tell you a "fix" tells me that you don't understand horses. I can only try and get you to admit this so you can decide and accept that you are the problem and when you fix you, your horse gets better.

Read my horsemanship page, it is a bit long, but it will help you help yourself and your horse.

"a horse is only a reflection of you, if you do good your horse will do good"

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Well, I guess thanks, but first of all, if you read my question, I clearly stated I didn't use the whip since I did recognize her fear and chose not to use it. Second of all, in using the whip I simply wanted to use it as most dressage riders do, as an extension of my arm to ask her to move away from me and teach her that it will not be used to hurt her or chase her, not to strike some kind of fear into her. I have never once hit my horse with anything, chased her with it, or even threatened to do so, so I am frankly quite shocked you would accuse me of that especially since I clearly stated that the instant I saw her fear I stopped even holding it in my hand. I don't use one when I ride either. So, I think I listen to what my horse tells me very well. If you read my last sentence, I was asking you if you could help me with some techniques to help me help her understand that it won't be used for that purpose, and how I can train her to move away from me on the lunge, with or without the lunge whip. I wasn't asking for some kind of "FIX", or accusing my horse of having a problem, and if you get so irritated with people asking for help training/retraining their horses, then I suggest you not be a part of this website. So, obviously you completely misunderstood my entire question. Maybe I wasn't clear in my question, but I hope you understand my intention was never to use the whip in any malicious way. I don't even care if I never use it. I'm quite happy not using it. I just know from previous experiences, it can be helpful in a way as an extension of your arm to cue the horse for what you want them to do ie: move away from you, make a circle bigger. So I apologize if this is all a misunderstanding, but I think you should read more closely to what the question is before jumping to conclusions.

ANSWER: OK you're right, the horse is not telling you anything, I misunderstood your question, I did not listen, you are doing absolutely everything right and this must be a horse issue, after all YOU have working with this horse for two years and it just can't learn, so it must be the horse.

Silly me, jumping to conclusions.

Good day!

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Wow Rick, I was shocked when I read your response to this horse owner's question as I was doing a search for some information. It was incredibly obvious this was a conscientious, caring owner trying to get some direction about how to communicate with her horse. If you read her questions, she never once blamed her horse, only the way people handled the horse before her. How mature of her to recognize that. What a shame professionals belittle and judge people with such honest intentions instead of encouraging them and leading on the right path. I'm sure Liz would benefit from some one on one training from an expert. You'd certainly benefit from the same on how to communicate with people in a constructive way. Answer: Thanks for your input and not to put too fine a point on it, I don't care about your opinion either. I do this to help horses and people are the main problem with horses. I can't help a horse when a owner wants to make excuses, blame others, come up with a hundred and one reasons on why it is not them. There are plenty of other people who will give feel good advice. 95% of all horse issues are owner issues, until a person accepts that fact - I can't help them and I don't want to waste my time. So if I offend someone who is making a mistake with a 1000 pound animal that can kill them, others or cause the horse to kill himself, frankly I care. I volunteer my time and experience, I know what I am doing and I give the best advice I can. I have a web site with over 400 pages of FREE information and that only scratches the surface of horses, so when people rush out buy a horse and then want to write someone on the internet to solve all their horse problems in an email, I don't have time to give them a lifetime of education. I direct them to my site, I make information available and do what I can. What I won't do is get into an discussion about excuse, blame, how it is not them or other things. I assure you no one hurts me by not asking me a question.

What you and others don't see is the nice letters I get from people that take my advice, read my site, educate themselves and then write me on how my information changed their relationship with their horse and they finally realize that they were causing all the problems and now they have just a great understanding relationship with their horse. Then I know I have helped "a horse" have a better life. The fact that a human benefited is of less concern to me.

So feel free to add yourself to the list of people that don't like my advice. Funny thing about life, there are normally two sides to a fence and most people choose what side they stand on.

Question: After many years away from horses, I have recently inherited a 16 month old filly and a ten yr old mare- her mother, both arabs of good descent. I grew up on arabs and am very confident upon the horse, in any situation I can think of, including shying, running, rearing, bucking...but have little experience on the ground. I have been working with the filly, using natural horsemanship techniques I have learned from reading and from friends, and we seem to be getting a good relationship going. The very first day she came, she had never been out of her birth pasture, was sent over night on a semi with the mom, came out and freaked out- she ended up catching me off guard and spinning around and kicking me- a shoulder hit and I flew to the ground. That was 3 months ago. We have gained confidence and trust until last night, when I was working her a bit outside of her pasture, in the round pen- just learning how to lead out off a hand cue, to eventually lunge. She is a smart one, and learns quickly. Anyway, the weather was changing and she was freaking out and wanted back in the pasture, rearing up, then twice trying to spin around and kick me. Not the get you in the knee kick, but high in the air, get you in the head kick. In all the years I was on the farm with our 5 arabs, I had never, ever experienced or heard of one of them kicking at a person. I can't really afford a trainer, but want the best for both of us. I also think this is a potentially very dangerous situation. I can try to sell the mare to pay for some help. She is a good filly, but I am losing confidence in my long term commitment and would like to know if you think this is a normal reaction to a perceived scary situation? and do you think that we can overcome this. On the positive side, I didn't get kicked as I was holding her properly, and we were successful on getting across the compound back to the pasture while she was nervous. I am not petty and I promise not to complain about your answer. My dream has been to get back into horses and I love how smart she is. I am worried that I will be afraid of her and that will impair my ability to train her. Thank you, I really appreciate any help.

Answer: This horse is being a normal horse. Anytime you handle a horse it is dangerous, a lot of people just don't know the danger. This little one is teaching you, so learn well. A does not care how much you know, how experienced you are or how many other horses you have owned. They are all about survival, fear, safety and a leader. You are right she kicked you since she caught you off guard, you were not paying attention, you were not ready, you did not set her up for success, you did not help her succeed, she kicked you, it was your fault and now the horse has to pay. The pays by learning a bad habit, by learning she can kick a human now, by learning that you don't know what you are doing. Everything you do with a horse you have to look at what you teaching and what the horse is learning. You teach good habits or bad habits. Kicking you is a bad habit, you taught it, you did not prevent it, you did allowed it happen and now the horse knows.

The horse does not need a trainer, you do. I always tell people work on yourself and your horse will get better. You are thinking since you have experience that this horse cares, it does not. A horse evaluates you every time you handle it or are around it. So experience, knowledge, ego, ribbons, awards, won prizes mean nothing to a horse. It cares if you can control its feet, if you are in charge, if you are a good leader and if you can keep it safe. A horse will test you and if you fail (you failed when you got kicked) then they get smarter and lose confidence in you.

Please don't try and justify this as a horse issue, as a mom issue, as a buddy sour issue, as a poor abused neglected horse issue, not matter what anyone tells you or what you think, I assure you, this is a YOU issue. So you either learn and get better or you buy, sell, find a trainer, take bad advice, listen to anyone that will talk to you or get out of horses.

This horse is being a normal horse doing normal horse things and unfortunately you are being a human, smart, experienced human doing normal human things. Until you become more horse, learn to think, act, understand and talk to horse, it will not work, the horse will win, you will get hurt, the horse will pay.

There many more people that have gotten out of horses than are into to horses. That does not happen by chance.

So read my site, read books, spend time the horse learning and not just teaching, watch the mom talk to the horse and learn their language. I have lots of info on my site, if you make the time to learn so you can help these horses and in the end you will get more than you give.

Rick

Question:Hi Rick,

I rescued an OTTB gelding about a year ago. He is the son of Holy Bull - grandson of Storm Cat. He is a beautiful, strong and the smartest horse I've ever had. The problem is my leadership skills with him. He is very different than my other horses in that he is aloof and dominate. Can you tell me the best way to improve on my skills so I can help him learn to trust people and be happy just being a horse? He is turned out 24/7 and has the best of nutrition and vet care I just can't seem to bond with him. Right now I am doing Parelli natural horsemanship with him which has helped a bit but he still wants to bite, strike and just be generally cranky at times. Will he ever be able to bond with a person? I could not love him more so I want to do what's best for him.

Thank you

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

Answer: Bloodlines, moms and dads don't mean anything to a horse or me, only people want to add some value to that. All horses are strong, smart and beautiful. So this tells me that you have not had many horses and really don't understand them. Parelli should help, but the problem is you. You think this horse cares that you love him, he does not. A horse wants a strong leader so it can relax. You are more worried about being this horse's friend, so you are being nice and think you are being kind. You are confusing the horse, you are not giving good direction, you are not being a strong leader, you are not showing this horse that you are someone the he should listen to or respect, so he treats you like a lower horse.

Read my horsemanship page, treat this horse like a lower horse, you need to be the strong higher horse or this horse will never love, like or respect you.

-----Follow up -----

Question: reply:

You are right. I just spent the day with my horse concentrating on thinking like a lead horse. I think I was pitying him. All the horror stories I had heard about the lives of racehorses and what they endure made me feel sorry for him. He doesn't need that. The other horses in our herd don't feel sorry for him, he's just another horse. They see him as a leader and their security. So I have to let the past go and be his leader so that he can feel secure. Thanks BTW- Taking my sunglasses off helped too. Good advise on your website.

Answer: Good, glad I can help. Keep reading and learning, understanding these guys is a life long journey and they are always teaching us, so don't forget. The best teacher of the horse, is the horse.

Question: What is your stance on the slaughter of horses.

Answer: I discuss this on my site. I have a slaughter video link on my bad horsemanship page. The short answer is people cause it, people do it and horses pay for it. I would rather see a horse starve in the wild than killed in a cruel, mean and fearful manner.

Read my site and you will understand why I say what I say and why I believe what I believe.

And the old story about can't feed them and too many, I say the same thing applies to many children and we don't slaughter them after they are born anyway.

As always, horses pay for people's mistakes. It is never the horse's fault.

Rick

Question: I have a very sweet mare that I am starting. She is just 3 years old. She is very respectful and is very responsive to verbal commands and ground training. The problem is that she has an awful buck. I have only saddled her and have not mounted her yet, but once I cinch her up she is fine until she starts moving at a trot or faster. Then she bucks so big and so hard that she is dangerous. I cannot stay in the round-pen or indoor arena with her because she doesn't respect my space the way she normally does on the ground without a saddle. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer: Read my site and learn to understand a horse. You do not understand horses or you would not use sweet mare and that you can't stay in the round pen with this horse since she does not respect you.

You are right, she may be very sweet and she does not respect you, but this is not a horse problem. You need to educate yourself so you can think like a horse, understand a horse, learn how to talk to a horse in horse language and understand why horses do what they do.

Your horse is being normal.

Question: I went to your sight and read what you said about turning horses out together, which is great and the way you should do it, but where I am the problem is I'm afraid if I put them together they will kick and break a leg or something else will happen to them. I have 4 horses on 1/2 acre. I turn them out 2 at a time, the ones that get along. I recently got a horse that I put in a pen next to another horse and he pawed the fence until the next morning he was three legged. Vet said it was like smashing your hand in a car door. When it is his turn to go out in the horse trap, he stands at the gates of the other horses and shows his teeth and tosses his head up and down and he hit the gate and got a big knee from it. He is well now, but I guess my question is will he hurt my other horses if I turn him loose with them? I know is silly, but I really want to get him happy! Thank You

Answer: All horses fight, kick and bite, it is what they do. The fence causes more aggressiveness and increases their will to fight and dominate. feed them well, throw 8 to 10 piles of hay in the area, not too close and not by fence on in corners and then let them go. Yes one may get a broke leg, one may get bit, and they will fight, but if you have gotten rid of corners and taken away the will to fight for food, then the initial fights will be less. You can also round pen and exercise the aggressive horse until it is very tired and then it will be less worried about fighting if it is tired.

Your horses, your choice, I have done and seen it done 1000 times, maybe once a horse got hurt and it was because of fence and corner. What ever you do STAY OUT IT, and don't try and save or help or get involved, put in the area and leave so they will not run to you or pay attention to you, they need to pay attention to the other horses.

Rick

Question: Have a horse here older(16) unbroke mustang. Taught him to lead and do groundwork pick up feet etc. He is the most questioning and fearful horse of the mustangs and others I have ever worked. Trailer loading came so I could get him to my place. I do reward for forward and keep them focused on the trailer. I spent 8 hours just easing this horse into the trailer(ramp) which I don't care much for anyway. Goes in now but backs out immediately. I am practicing tying skills outside now and working behind him but he never pulls or spooks outside. Thought I might put him in a box stall and make that his trailer to practice with. He stays in longer with me than when I ask him to load in the trailer by himself. He is tall and I don't want him to smack his head as his ears almost touch anyway. The trailer is a nice open 3-horse slant. I have opened all the windows and tried first and second hole but the reaction is the same. I spend literally hours trying to get another second of stay time and I always try to back him out before he comes out by himself. I have to work by myself. Any suggestions. I feel he is just so fearful and possibly claustrophobic. The owner loaded him years ago in a fire emergency by having two people one pulling and one beating behind. I hate that. But he goes in fine now just won't stay. Any other ideas very appreciated. I load him twice a day regular halter and lead-no chains or knots or sticks, to try to get him more comfortable with time. Thanks

Answer: All horses are claustrophobic. If I put you in a trailer, locked you up and drove around you would not like it either. Horses don't like to be ridden, don't like saddle, don't like nails in their feet, don't like to be tied up, but they do it.

Stop trying to get him to stay in. Load him half way and then YOU decide to back him out, load him two steps in and YOU decide to back him out, let him leave the trailer 50 times and he will learn he will get out if he goes in. 8 hours is way too long and You are sending messages that you are worried about the trailer, you are fearful of what can happen, you are making him more nervous by worrying about his nervousness.

Load and unload him 15 times and make it your idea to back him out, on the 16th time just relax and ignore him for 5 secs, then back him out and then SLOWLY move up a few seconds from there. Don't go from 5 secs and then ask for 30 secs or the horse will leave when he wants, any time he wants to leave the trailer, make him leave and make it your idea, soon he will like not having to leave.

This is a you issue and not a horse issue.

QUESTION: We loaded the horses in our 4 horse stock trailer today and headed to the mountains to trail ride. This is the second time these horses have been in this trailer. We put the smaller horse in the front and the larger behind. About 5 miles into our trip the smaller horse broke loose and flipped out causing the larger horse behind to get spooked and flip out as well. Anyway, by the time we got stopped and to the trailer both horses were on the floor. Large one on the bottom wedged sideways with her neck bent and smaller horse across her backend on the floor. We quickly got the lead ropes loose and the small horse jumped up while the larger horse laided there for a few seconds until we jumped in there and got her to her feet. Everyone was ok with a few scrapes and bumps. We tied small horse to the back with little slack in the rope and larger horse in the front. Another mile down the road I see large horse going down. She pulled back until she passed out. She has done this in the past being tied to a tube/post. It ruined our day and we ended up turning around before anything else happened and to get a better look at the larger horse as we weren't quite sure why she went down the second time. When we got home...they both were fine and have been roaming their pasture just as they normally do. The little horse also has a problem with standing tied and will rear up if there is any resistance or if she doesn't want to go in the direction you want her to. I've only had her for a short time. I'm thinking about a "BE NICE HALTER" or something of the sort. But the freaking out in the trailer has me worried and I'm afraid to load them up to go again. I was planning on taking them on a 10 mile trail ride to a forest service cabin for a couple of days (an hour drive) next weekend and now I'm afraid. I have never been so scared in my life and really thought the larger horse was dying and had a broken leg the way she was down in the trailer. Thank God it wasn't...things could have been a lot worse than what they were and I never want that to happen again. Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

ANSWER: OK, I always take the horse's side, so here is where I tell you what you did wrong and how you caused all of this. Your horses do not have a problem, they were set up to fail by you, yes I know not intentionally but intentions do not matter to horses. You did not teach these horses how to tie properly, you did not use good halters and ropes or they would not have got away, you did not tie them properly or they would not have got away, you did not tie them to a strong enough tie point or they would not have got away. No matter how you look at it, you caused what happened.

Had you done it right this would not have happened. Had you taken more time this would not have happened, had you understood horses better this would not have happened.... all horse problems are people problems. Your horse could not have been hurt or put in this situation without you...

So you can stop with the feel bad, worried, ruined my day or however else you want to see this.. you caused it, you did not prevent it, you did not prepare the horse properly and like always the horse had to pay for your mistakes.

I have no idea what a "be nice halter" is but by the name someone created it so it would sound nice and appeal to people that don't know any better. See, you want to see this as a horse issues and you are looking for an easy fast fix. Which is why you will continued to put your horses in danger. The fix is YOU. When you do right your horse will do right. When understand horses you will be able to predict things like this, when you take the time it takes you will know that it takes less time.

This is a you problem so fix yourself and your horse will get better. Read my horsemanship page, my rope halter page and my tying a horse page. Then if you can't figure out what you need to do write me back.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Thank you for your answer. I agree that it is my fault and that I led my horses to

failure due to ignorance and not understanding horses better. I'm not looking for an easy fix. I'm trying to evaluate the situation and prevent this from ever happening again. Many things (standing tied for one) that we need to work on. I've also started to feed them out of this new trailer to get them use to it a little more. Hoping it will decrease the fear of the trailer.

The "be nice halters" or "anti-pull halters" are the type of halters that apply pressure when a horse pulls back. They are not halters that you throw on a horse and think your problems are solved...I understand that! The horse will need to be taught to move forward to release pressure and so on. I'm not sure if these will work with my little Arab as when she feels any threat she will back up, rear and fight until she feels release then she stops. Especially if she does not want to do something (i.e. cross bridge when being led). She has never reared when I'm on her...only when leading her. She will do the backing up and spinning around bit when I'm on her which I don't like and have been working hard to correct with her. I've noticed it is when she doesn't want to go in the direction (away from home (herd) usually) when we ride out from our home. We usually go in circles to stop the backing up and redirect until she goes in the direction I want her to. As I said before, I haven't had her for very long and am learning quickly about her.

I will read your entire site and search for answers to help our situation and to especially improve my horsemanship!!! I'm in no way shape or form an expert at this...but working at it. Thanks so much for making the info available and for answering e-mail. Your service, even if it's not entirely what a person wants to hear is more valuable than you'll ever know.

Answer: Well, glad to hear that you are accepting responsibility and not blaming the horse. You have just taken a big step to improve your horsemanship. Your horse does not see you as a strong leader, all the things you are seeing is a lack of respect, maybe some fear, from the lack of trust/respect. If this horse saw you as a fair firm leader, she would not be testing you by stopping, pulling back, rearing and other non-sense. I could take this horse and that behavior would stop in about less than 5 mins. Not tooting my horn, just that I would show the horse, I am leader, I can make you move and feel uncomfortable, I can stop your movement, I can make you stop, I can control where you move, as soon as the horse saw that, all this resistance would go away. My guess is you are being too nice, too easy, not consistent and giving bad direction. All of this tells a horse, don't trust this person, this person is not a good leader, I better test this person every time to make sure she really knows what she wants and to make her prove to me that she really is the leader. Every test you fail, you tell the horse it was right, every test you pass, you tell the horse you are leader.

A horse that rears only does so when someone is pulling on their head, only people that pull on a horse and make them rear, don't know what they are doing, so they don't know how to change what they do. No human can out pull a horse, but a small child can attack the butt of a horse and make a horse move away and in a circle or back up. If this horse rears, she needs to be backing up fast and fearful and you need to be chasing her backwards for 5 feet or so. A few of those lessons and this horse will quickly figure out that rearing is NOT the right answer and rearing only makes me get chased backwards and that is not fun and I don't want to do that. You need to understand a horse to know how a horse thinks so you can "think like a horse" and then you will see big changes.

Read the site, read the articles, watch the training vids, visit the links I suggest, "as you get better, your horse will get better".

Rick

Question:Hi,

I have read the site, its brilliant and I am totally prepared for you to tell me I am stupid and have made some major mistakes but I really need some honest advice so here we go... I have a yearling, QH cross, which is pretty unusual since I am in England...love her to bits but she started weaving last summer when she was weaned. We have american barn type stables, so a weave grate isnt really possible and I know thats not the real solution but I really dont want her to ruin her joints, or form more of a habit, so this weaving lark has to stop.

I kept a horse in the block with her, but she still weaves over any fence/door when she wants "something". She will weave if she is not near her mother, my riding horse and she will weave if you walk away from the fence/gate after letting her go. She will weave when she runs out of hay, or in anticipation of food in at meal times. I thought a summer on the grass with other youngsters might help but I have recently brought her home to try and heal the sunburn scabs

on her heels (not easy) and the problem has erupted again. I have not got a mirror, someone said I should try this, but because she doesn't weave when she doesn't think you're looking (I have spied on her) or if there is no "temptation" the other side of a fence, I have been loath to pay so much for a stainless steel mirror.

I do not want to tell her off for weaving, I do not want to get a weave grate and ignore the problem, but I do not want a horse with joint problems and one that will be weaving for the next 20+ years (it grates on my nerves to see her, especially since she does it so fast it makes me feel sea-sick!). So you see, I really don't want to continue doing things wrong...but I don't know what to actually do?!

Oh, don't know if this is useful info but she is super pushy, I try to be firm but when I walk away in the field she will do that stropy face, rearing, trotty thing she used to do when her mother would walk away when she wanted milk...I am not her mother but I have a hard time making her believe it, which is sweet but also I can see the potential danger. I need to set boundaries, but she seems to ignore my efforts.

Answer: My guess is you weaned her..why do people do this, who cares if a horse is with their mom. I just don't get it and this is a woman thing since guys could care less if a baby hangs out with mom. You did this too soon and now you have created this habit since you felt the need to take a young horse from its mom. The mirror thing and other tricks would not be needed if you let horses be horses. Put the horse with its mom and let it be a horse. This really pisses me off to hear this. This poor horse is being kept alone and has now developed a bad habit that will hurt it for the rest of its life, all because people, you or others have this crazy obsessive need to wean a baby. When people stay out of it, horses do fine. I really don't want to hear all your good reasons for weaning this horse, you caused this problem and now you want to "feel" bad or be annoyed. What about this poor horse, maybe it was not ready to be ripped away from mom, maybe it was scared and insecure and felt abandoned and it had to do something to adjust to this loneliness-- all caused by people wanting to wean.

Put the horse in pasture, put the horse with its mom and stay out of horse saving. Other horses will fix this if PEOPLE stay out of it. Your comment about worrying about joints later is irritating to me. What about what this horse is going through and feeling and living every day, you are worried about joints.. it just amazes me how people can claim to care about horses and then do what they do to horses.

YOU have done enough, put the horse with horses and stay out of it. That is my take. I always take the horse's side, so forget how you feel and think like a horse.

Question: I have a 4 year old paint gelding who won't give me his head in the round pen. He will transition wonderfully, stops and looks, but I can't get him to yield his head once he is stopped. I walk up, then back-up hoping he will turn his head my way, but nope. He is very calm, not at all mean, and generally very mellow. I was in the round pen with him for almost 2 hours, I tried making him move out at an extended trot or canter hoping he would realize it requires a whole lot less energy to submit, but once again nope. Any suggestions?

Thanks

Answer: whatever you are doing you are doing it wrong. The horse is telling you this since he is not giving you the right answer. You are probably not releasing correctly with proper timing. Two hours is way too long to round pen, you are going to cause leg and joint problems for the horse, horses are not made to run in circles. You are chasing and not teaching or training the horse.

Read my horsemanship page, I go into round penning, but without seeing what you are doing I can't be specific, but I assure you if you do it right the horse will do it right.

Question: My horse is 5 years old and very calm and easy to ride. She is so unreactive that she totally ignores the electric fencing and just pushes right thru it to get to the grass or cornfield. I am afraid she will wander too far to the road and/or get hurt as sometimes it takes me over an hour to find her. Can you recommend any training or other options on fencing to keep her in? She is a little dense and just doesn't get it. Now a second horse has picked up the trick and I have two to find. Help! I don't want to have to get rid of her as the kids can ride her safely, but I also can't keep tracking her down.

Answer: This is not a horse issue. Someone, maybe you, did not put up a good enough fence to make sure the horse did not learn this behavior, so now that the horse has been allowed to learn it, you want to blame the horse for being dense. Had you put up a proper fence or stronger shocking fence you would not have set this horse up to fail.

Your hot wire is probably intermittent, which means it is not hot all the time. Run it so it is hot all the time, also run a pipe or wooded fence so it can not just break the hot wire easy. I am only guessing but I bet you tired to take the easy way, not put up real fence and decided to cheat and just put up a hot wire thinking it would work. All bad decision on your part and the horse has to pay now. Which is why it is never the horse's fault.

So invest the time and money you should have and put up a good sturdy fence and then run a hot wire on it, so the horse will learn proper behavior to keep it safe.

Question: Hi Rick, I have a retired standardbred mare who sometimes turns her head (her left eye and ear facing the ground)when I'm riding her. It is usually when I am pushing her away from the other horses though she has done it when following her best paddock companion when trotting up a fairly steep hill towards home.

She does have a hunters bump though the vet said she is in no pain. On the lunge she bucks and kicks out if pushed hard, though no head turning.

In the paddock she does a sort of loop head shake only occasionally and usually when the horses are moving to another area or if she is waiting to get through a gate.

I am wondering if you think I'm doing something that is troubling her?
thanks for your time

Answer: Not sure, could be a kink in neck, could be a dominate eye things, could be that is her good and her other eye is going bad, could be an inner ear issue/infection, could be neck or top line imbalance, without more info can't say. Studs will shake head back and forth to gain attention or to show dominance, so could be take off of that behavior. If it is not medical, then you are probably causing it, but you have to try and get her do it under the same circumstances and then you can tell if it is learned or pain or medical or habit or reitance. bucking when pushed could be direspect/lack of respect or pain, so not sure on that or if they are connected.

Try and isolate the behavior and then isolate the variables so you can pin it down better then figure how to deal with it.

Rick

QUESTION: What is your opinion about when it is OK to ride a horse with pain issues. I have been riding a 9 yo TB that was started on the track and then moved to intensive jumper training only to "lose his mind" and become "dangerous". He had some time off in pasture and then I began riding him. He has not been dangerous at all, but perhaps a bit distrustful and I sense is stiff in all the leg joints and neck, as well as having a little back pain (though the back seems to be his least issue) I have been riding him about two months now, three times per week, about 30 minutes each time, some trail, some arena. He has become my buddy, more mentally relaxed, but his back pain has increased some, and I don't know how to evaluate joint pain. I will be meeting with his vet soon to ask. I know that ground work and befriending him have been good for him, and he is much more willing and relaxed under saddle already, but because his back pain has increased (the saddle was custom, and really seems to fit), I just don't know if it's more good than bad or more bad than good to ride him? I ride a few other horses as well and wonder in general if a horse has even a little back pain, would you say not to ride him at all?

ANSWER: If your back hurt would you want or like to give piggyback rides? Probably not. Jumping the most painful and damaging thing you can do to a horse. It is very unnatural, it puts enormous about pressure on the front legs and back and a does not do it in the unless it gets caught where it has too, so then you add the weight of the a rider, saddle and landing on only two legs and you do damage every jump.

Get on top of a table and jump off, you will land on two feet now get back on and jump off and only land on one foot, do not use the other foot, it hurts. You put a 1000 pound horse who normally supports their weight on four feet, then you add a riders weight and then you make them land on only half their feet and can't wonder why the horse is in pain.

You did not say how much you weigh so that is a factor, how thick is your saddle pad, what type of saddle (eng or west), is the horse shod or bare foot..all factors relating to the pain.

Bottom line, treat a horse the way you would want to be treated, if you sprained your ankle and made you run, the pain may not be that bad, but I am sure you would not like it, would be happy with me making you run and would enjoy or think it was fun.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: The TB is not being jumped anymore and I dismount on the trail on long downhills. My relationship with him is strictly one of learning and companionship. We just do short trail rides and or flat work exercises in the arena. In total: about 30 min per session 3x per week. The thing is, his attitude is improving but my guess (just based on the way he moves and by palpating his back) is that his physical pain is not reducing. I sometimes think he really enjoys feeling like he's doing something and other times I worry that he is physically vulnerable and uncomfortable. So I am torn about whether he should be retired from riding altogether or whether the "work" has some value. He is shod on the front only. His saddle is english/ all-purpose and I use a pad with 3/4" foam inserts. I am 150 lbs. Answer:For as much as you ride I would get rid of front shoes. Think about putting a metal plate in your shoe and walk around. Your joints and shins would hurt. At 9, for as much as you ride, going barefoot will help a lot. It may take a while for the horse to adjust and grow out but in the long run it will be better for horse.

An english saddle puts more weight on horse than western. A western spreads out weight more across back, where an english spreads it out only across the two side pads. Maybe an inch pad would help.

Just because you do not jump now, the damage was done long ago, you also may not know when the horse was started. If it was started at 2 that does damage before a horse fully grows, if it came from track, that is probably the case. For your weight with a good pad and saddle I would not think it would be an issue, but you never know, it could have a fracture in the spine or on any of it over 200 bones. Could have a swelling, cartilage build up or other things.

You have decide. Exercise is good and will help build muscle and work muscles, but if the horse is in pain then I would not do it, but I can't see horse so I can't tell. Just do everything you can to help and don't do anymore damage. What that means depends on what you see or learn from vet.

QUESTION: I have a filly just weaned at 6 months she has neo natal maladjustment syndrome. Signs were not sucking and grinding teeth. I am finding it difficult to introduce the lead to her I will attach it to her headstall in a large round yard and stall but she will only stand in the corner of the stall if in the yard she is panicking. Lead was placed on in the morning I removed it in the evening as she was not progressing. Help please

ANSWER: What the hell is this syndrome. It sounds like a fancy way of saying this young filly was abused, handled wrong, kept caged up, not allowed to mental grow with other horses and people have ruin her and made her a horse with a past and no future.

Forget the stupid headstall, help the horse. Put the horse with other horses and let it be for 6 months, they will fix what people have screwed up.

And forget the mumbo jumbo fancy talk describing what is wrong with the horse and let the horse be a horse with other horses. Read my horsemanship page on my site so you understand horses better.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: The syndrome used to be called Dummy foal or Wandering Syndrome. The foal was born that way. In simple terms they lack oxygen to the brain whilst being born. The filly has another horse with her whilst she is being weaned.

Answer: I am sure there are medical things that can go wrong with foals. In breeding can cause some issues as well. No matter what the cause and no matter what the problem. Being with other horses, roaming in open area and not caged or stalled is the best thing for any and all problems. Horses take care of horses, in the wild the stallion may have killed this baby if would not make it or hold the herd back, medical issues are hard to know for sure with horses since they can't talk, explain or tell us specifics so all we can do is guess.

My advice is keep the horse with horses so it can be a horse and let it learn grow and get better with other horses. Whatever you are doing does not appear to working and people tend to mess up more horses than they help and I have NEVER seen other horses mess us being horses without humans. Turn it out with horses and see what happens in a few months. Then if you don't see improvement, maybe get back involved, but try that first.

Question: sorry i ask you so many questions. ever since i found this sight your advice has been very helpful. so thanks for reading this.

i have been breaking this mare and she is afraid to cross creeks or any water for that matter.she wont even follow another horse through it. so this is what i have been doing. we have a small creek behind are house about 3 feet deep in the deepest spots on are land i have been walking her through it like repeatedly then i would ride her through it a couple of times it wasn't as easy as it sound it took a lot of patients and each time i would have her stand in the middle were it was deepest and i would feed her an apple wafer. i did this for about 1-1 1/2 hours. is this the right way to handle this problem will she eventually get over her water fears if i keep doing this. or is there another way i should be handling it? we also have a huge pond should i wade her through it?

Answer: Sounds pretty good to me. If it is warm, I would go out there during hottest part of day and get off her and maybe send her, lunge her a bit, just to get her listening and paying attention to you, not to get her tired or scared. Then after you get her really paying attention to you and listening, then you walk in the creek and lunge her there. Make her walk and trot both directions, stopping, coming into to you, and sending you out a few times. This is build her confidence, this will get her paying more attention to you than the water.

Don't make the focus the water. Just like too many people make the trailer the focus when they trailer load, that makes a horse nervous. Always make the focus on you and to listen to you, so always have the horse do things you know the horse will do. Pretty soon the horse will not care what it is, it will always know, to listen you and you will not hurt it.... so don't ever put a horse in position to get hurt, but always make a horse pay attention to you.

Another thing is work the horse next to the creek, have it back up, turn, flex, ride it up a few feet turn back a few feet, and then only let it rest and relax in the water, soon the horse will learn, I get to relax in the water... so the water is where I want to be... then it will be the horses idea to WANT to be in the water and you will not have to MAKE it go in the water. Always better when it is the horse's idea, you just have to figure how to make it the horse's idea.

If you do this twice a day, it will be good in a week, if you do it once a day it may not be good in 3 weeks and if you do only all day on a weekend, it will not be good for months.....

Everyday, twice a day builds routine, horse like routine since they like to know what is going to happen, they find comfort in routing and knowing and that builds trust and confidence and that is always better than fixing something fast....for the horse

Rick

Question: I have an x race horse who is a wonderful horse and you would never guess he was a racehorse. I have been gaming on him and he is doing awesome except one thing. He really stops on his front feet really hard when we stop. I always back him up after to try and get him to use his hind end, but still does it. Is there any other ways to get him to stop on hind and not

on front? Or am I out of luck. Answer: Sounds like the horse might be out of luck. A horse will do anything it is taught to do or required to. Just because you see this as a horse issue, does not make it so. This horse was never taught this and you need to learn how to teach so you can help him understand what you want. Him not doing it as nothing to do with what he wants. Without seeing this, I can tell if this a rider issue, maybe you are setting up the stop right, not in the right position, not with the right timing, then it could be an old injury or the horse has never been taught how to stop, race horses run and trot after a race and then walk after a trot and then are only stopped on a walk. Since you never want a race horse wanting to or thinking about stopping it is never taught or worked on. So you want to undo all his training to run run run by having him back up, it will not work. I always take the horse's side. This is not a horse issue, the horse does not know what you want, does not know how to give it to you and is confused and frustrated. Only you can change this. There is no fast way or short answer. If it is important enough for you to want it, then you will do what YOU need to do to fix it, read, study, learn, and make yourself better and your horse will get better.

Question: hi, my pony Chino runs at me with his ears back most of the time after i let him off his headcollar/halter and lead rope. i get scared but i kind of realise now that since he is a stallion he will try to fight me because he wants to be leader of the pack like they do in the wild, which is me & him only i am\$ the leader. i no that i have to be the leader of the pack and i have to tell him off for doing so. i try but he is really strong and sometimes i get really scared.

please help me as soon as possible.
thank you very much

Answer: The only way the horse knows you are a leader is if you show him and act like one. You have to act BIG, sound loud, raise your hands, throw a rock, or swing a stick at him and make him run off. If you move away or act scared he thinks he is the leader. So before you take collar off, make him back up, make him move away from you, pull his head to his butt and show him that you are in charge. It sounds like you need an adult with you to help you. This horse may hurt you so doing this can get you hurt, make sure you ask your parents before you try anything and have them watch in case he tries to bite you.. This cannot be fixed by an email so you need an adult to help you.

Question: I was really looking for someone with medical knowledge who could help us. If you can't help, I understand.

We have an old pony (about 20 years old) He is losing weight and can't gain any weight no matter how much we feed him. His coat hasn't shed in 2 seasons. His stomach is contracting all the time and he has become so thin. There are not many vets around here that do house calls and we can't really afford the expense to pay one to come to our home. We have read online about cushings disease, but he is not showing all of those symptoms. Could you advise us in any way as to how to help our "gypsy". Thanks for your time.

Answer: 20 years is not that old. Lots of things can cause what you are seeing. Lack of exercise, lack of grass hay, bad teeth, not being wormed and many others. As horses get older they do not shed or grow hair as easy, so grooming is more important to help them. If his feet are not done he could be in pain so he walks less, which means he eats less and things go down hill from there.

If this horse has all the grass hay the can eat, a flake of alfalfa once a day, some rolled or whole oats (2 - 3 cups a day) some rice bran maybe a little sweet feed mixed in, this horse will put on weight. If you can't afford a vet, then maybe you are not providing enough of the right feed often enough. Also maybe you should find the horse a home where a vet is available. Putting on weight is not an overnight thing, it may take a few months, but just do it slow and don't try and do too much too fast or you can kill the horse.

So do this:

worm the horse

have the teeth checked

give lots of grass hay, 2 flakes morning and night (grass being Oat, Rye, Orchard, etc)

give alfalfa hay a flake a day, half morning half at night

give 2 cups of oats in morning and 2 cups at night

give 1 cup of rice bran morning and night

This horse will gain weight if you do what you need to do, you cannot just throw some low quality hay out once or twice a day and expect that to work. This horse should have hay out all the time so she can eat when she wants to and never be hungry and never have to wait for food.

QUESTION: I recently purchased a 5 year old Belgian who came to me with poor ground manners. We have been working on teaching her that it is not ok to plow over humans on the lead and to stand in the cross ties, etc. These things are improving, although, she will still test her limits. She has, however, begun chasing children who come out to the pasture to retrieve their horses. She does not do this to me or other adults. She is very large, weighing over 2000 pounds, and I am concerned with the danger of this situation. Is there anything I should focus on in her handling to help alleviate this problem. I am not in the pasture to do any type of intervention when the chasing occurs.

ANSWER: Like most problems, this is a people problem not a horse problem. A horse will not chase something that does not run. If the child cannot stop a horse from chasing it, maybe it should not be in the pasture with many horses. ONLY the person getting chased can stop this, not you. If you are there and do stop it, it means nothing to the horse. A horse will only respect someone it has too respect.

You can tell the kid to keep a plastic grocery bag in her pocket and when your horse comes to shake it over her head at the horse. The problem is this is just a cheat and does not address the real problem, which is the kid that is letting your horse chase her, the kid is running from the horse, the kid is not showing the horse it can't chase her, the kid is causing the horse to chase her. All horses are bigger than people, it has nothing to do with size. Your horse may also be protecting the herd or wanting to play....it is obvious that you or the kid being chased does not understand horses or the way they think. This is perfectly normal horse behavior and anyone who understands horse would know this. If a horse kicked you when you took his food, you might see this as the horse is mean or the horse is possess of his food or he has a bad habit..... I would say it normal horse behavior.. A horse is only a horse and that is all it knows how to be, this is NOT a horse problem.

Read my site it will help you see horses as they are and understand them better.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: This is both a people problem and a horse problem! I am fully aware that this can be normal horse behavior. I am also fully aware that it is most likely occurring because the child is not demonstrating to the horse that she is in charge. However, acting disrespectful to any human is not tolerated at our stable and this horse needs to learn this. I was simply looking for any suggestions you might have to assist this horse in learning that she is always sub-ordinate to any human being. And size does make a difference. This horse is gigantic compared to the other horses in the pasture and kids who are normally confident in the pasture are intimidated by her, as are the adults. Even other horses who would normally be more dominant in the field are intimidated by her. And she was the bottom horse in the pecking order at her prior home. I have lots of experience with abused animals and have never identified an animal as mean. Anyone who works with animals on any regular basis would tell you that animals act instinctively and don't have "mean" in their repertoire of behaviors. That is purely a human behavior. And I could care less if this is "normal" horse behavior. It is not acceptable to chase people out of your pasture - ever! I have reviewed your website. And I have to tell you that you rip on people who call their horses names but you do the same thing to people! Telling people they obviously don't know anything about horse behavior is the same thing as calling their horse stupid! It doesn't provide any solutions to the problem. You didn't tell me anything I didn't already know. But thanks anyway.

Answer: OK, you are right, if you know so much and are so experienced, then why are asking me questions.

This is not a horse problem, we can agree to disagree. I think you are wrong and 99% of all horse problems, including this one, is a people problem. This horse WILL not chase someone that does not run. And you are on such a high horse that you want to get insulted by answer. If you know all that you told me you, then why have you not fixed this? If you fix this, write me

back and please explain how you can train a horse not to chase someone when you are not there and the other person runs and is scared of the horses. This will be a new revelation in horse training.

Your response reminds me of an old saying:

"It is hard to get down from your high horse gracefully."

And if you don't like my answers or my web site, feel free not to read or ask me questions and don't go to my site. See that is the wonderful thing about being a human, WE have choices and horses do not, which is why "it is never the horse's fault".

Good Day!

QUESTION: Hi, im hoping you might have some advice for me about my mares lameness. About 4 years ago some 'fool' left the field gate open and all the horses ran loose around the surrounding fields.. my mare came back lame on the front left with no obvious reason (no cuts, swellings or heat etc) this went on for a couple of weeks so got the vet out, she was taken in for X-rays and all sorts of injections in her legs and anything the vet could think of (she was at the vets for roughly 2week) eventually the vet just said they had no idea why she was lame and that its perminant. After 5months of lameness she was sound again and fine to be ridden. I continued to ride her fine mainly hacking with some schooling or jumping for about 2 years. Since then i've put her on loan a few times and shes gone lame from what i can gather this is why - 1st time on loan the loaner trotted her on roads for over an hour and she was then lame for 2months - 2nd tome on loan larger rider and constantly ridden in school bending on hardish ground and was lame for 4 months - 3rd time small rider ridden ridden only in school again and was lame for 2/3months. Each time its the same leg shes lame on, i find that running cold water on it helps but as i said theres no heat or swelling. I was wondering if you have any idea as to what it could be or how i may be able to prevent it so she can be used more, at the moment shes hacked lightly and doing fine though. Shes only ever had a problem with being lame since the day she escaped 4 years ago, before that i use to compete every weekend jumping showing xcountrys etc for 4 years with no problem, shes 14.2hh and 14 now i got her when she was 5 she came from american adventure originaly sold on at 4years to who i brought her off who broke her lightly and i brought her on from there with no problems. I know shes 3/4 quarter horse not 100% what the other 1/4 is. Sorry to ramble wanted to get everthing out. I understand not many replies are now given but any advice will be listened to and i will be greatfull although i also understand i may never get to the bottom of her lameness. Thanks for reading.

Regards, Gemma.

P.s i've uploaded a picture of her to show her weight and leg build. Shes the bay.

ANSWER: There are two types of horses: Those that are hurt and those that will be hurt.

My first thought is stop giving her to others so they can hurt her. She has a injury, jumping, running on hard ground and shoes are the worst things for this horse. You said when you left her alone she got better, no shit, she was not carrying an extra 150 lbs, she was not being run, she was not being jumped.... I can't imagine why she got better....

You asked for my opinion and I almost always take the horse's side. This horse can't tell you it hurts, just because you can't see pain does not mean she is better. I hurt a lot of the time when I some things and I don't limp or you would not know it. Just because she is not limping does not mean she is not hurting. Go do some jumping jack on the cement and I bet your feet, ankles or knees will hurt and you may not limp.

I say stop jumping her absolutely. That is the worst thing for a healthy horse, it causing pounding, concussions, pressure and puts all 1000 pounds on two small hooves with compounding force. Think about it a horse walks on four hooves to support their weight, you cut that support in half when you jump since the horse lands on two front feet.. if you don't think that is a big deal, go stand on a chair and you jump to the ground with only ONE foot for support, cut you support in half and maybe you will see how much pain it causes, once again, people forget or don't want to think like a horse.

How often do you see horses running in the wild, not often. How often do you see them

jumping, very rarely if ever. So we do these things 100 times more often and we add a saddle and the weight of a rider, run horses in circles and then wonder why so many horses have leg problems... it is pretty clear to me. You did not say and I hope you are not doing it, but a lot of people deal with this by giving bute to "ease" the pain.. this is abuse in my book, you ride and work a horse in pain, so you give them drugs to hide the pain so the horse won't limp and then later the horse has 5 times the pain and just stands around hurting...

So if you stop what you do, the will stop re-injuring this leg.

What I say next is not the problem or will not fix the problem, and pictures can be deceiving, but the hoof looks trimmed too low in heel or too long in toe, which might be causing some discomfort and the front right hoof looks too long in the heel, almost club... but again some time pictures to not show what is really there, just something to look at.... not so you can give the horse to someone to jump or run her, I say this to maybe ease some of the discomfort for the horse.

Rick

Question: I am working with a 14 yr old half arab mare that has apparently an issue with refusal and flipping over. I say apparently, as she has not flipped on me YET, but I have known her since she was foaled, and am familiar with her training history. I have worked with her for 2 weeks now, and in that time she has been coming along beautifully. I rode her the second day, walk, trot, and canter, very green, but did everything I asked, although without a headset. Twenty minutes on the third day and she stands while mounting, and doesn't walk through the bit. I work her in a full cheek snaffle in the round pen, with a martingale, and she settles in to the lesson nicely. The other day while riding her in the arena, she heard the voice of her former trainer and almost immediately refused going forward and got very light in front. I got off, remounted and quit her for the day. The next day, after our regular round pen lesson, I mounted in the arena, walked her uneventfully for about five minutes when she again refused and got light in front.

I am attracted to her intelligence and sensitivity to the point that I want to give her a chance, but this is the one area I am afraid of. I know the hands that broke her were inexperienced and very heavy. Under a trainers advice, she was pulled over in long lines when she reared. Since then she has flipped numerous times in the long lines and under saddle, and I understand her reluctance to trust anyone aboard.

Please, if there are any methods that DON'T involve popping her on the pole, tying her head between her knees, or any other man-handling ridiculousness, I would love to hear them. I need to break INTO her mind, without breaking both our bodies!

Thank you

Answer: Most flipping over, like most issues, are caused by people that don't know what they are doing. I have seen so called clinicians flip horses during demos and then blame the horse.

I have never seen a horse flip over if only one rein is pulled and the horse is able to find release. When a horse flips they are normally pulled over by a scared rider that pulled on both reins, leaned back and pulled the horse over, or a stupid tie down or things are used to hold the horse's head down and then the horse cannot find release so it panics and flips. A "trainer" at UC Davis killed a horse by doing this stupid stunt.

I would push this horse hard on the ground, make it speed up slow down stop and turn lots and with energy. Really make sure this horse knows what go means, what stop means, what turn means and try and push this horse stress level up so it will get scared and nervous and confused, then give good direction and help the horse deal with this. That way when you are on the back you will know what the horse knows and how to get it to do what you want and if the horse gets stuck, you can help it move out. When a horse stalls, you have to put it to work and not let sit there and build up a blow up. So back up, flex, turn, move out, something that the horse knows well. Ride time will fix this. Getting off the horse when nervous will only teach the horse how to get you off. If the horse rears always only pull ONE rein and lean forward, if you get off balance and fall backwards then you end up pulling the horse on top of you or making the fall back on top of you.

Question: Hi, I have a bucking question that is a bit different than those I found on your website. I have a ten year old gelding who hasn't been ridden a lot. He was trained as a three

year old by a professional natural horsemanship trainer, who had a hard time getting him to relax - he was very tense when ridden and felt like a 'powder keg'. Over the years, he has become relaxed and willing. The problem is if something spooks him, he doesn't shy, but just explodes into bucking with no warning. Last time this happened because a dog who was on the ride jumped out of the bushes right beside him. I was on the ground before I even realized he was going to buck. He isn't generally spooky, but I feel really unsafe riding him because of the lack of warning signs and the power behind his bucking when it does happen (he's dumped me twice in four years, but I am experienced and generally would be able to get control before the buck happens). Any suggestions?
Thanks for your help (I'm getting too old to be hitting the ground)

Answer: This sounds like a different one. As he gets older it should get less, but you said he is not ridden much, so that is my clue, "ride time" will help, I would do lot of sacking out while he is saddled and try and get him to buck and when he does do not stop sacking out, keep pressure until he stops bucking. So tie him good, saddle up, sack out and try and get bucks, the more he bucks and you do not stop pressure, the more he will learn that bucking gets him nothing but tired, a lot of work and does not get release from pressure. So far, his bucks have gotten him release since you end up on ground. He has to be taught that dealing with fear with bucking is not good so he can learn that he can be scared and not have to buck.

If you can find a young guy who thinks bucking is fun, have him ride the horse in a round pen and you go spook or sack out and see if the horse bucks and let the young guy ride it out, and that will help the horse learn bucking gets him nothing, it will also allow the rider to correct the bucking by taking the head away and stopping the horse from bucking so the horse learns not to buck.

Time is the key, if you don't have to ride the horse enough, then you will not have time to work with the horse enough, and the horse will not get better.

Question: Have a Tennessee Walker, 8 yr old with an incredible gait, very smooth, but is getting where he starts stepping away when i start to get if the saddle, and his eyes get large and he sometimes rears up a little or dances about until i get him moving, after we go a few steps he smooths out, got any ideas how to calm him down?

Answer: You see this differently than I do. All of this tells me the horse is telling you, he does not respect you, he does not trust you, he does not think you are a good leader, you are not giving him enough direction, he is doing this since you have not stopped him and he is testing you and you are failing the test.

Read my horsemanship page on my site about test, rearing, herd behavior and pecking order, it will help make this clearer.

Rick

Question: Hi, I have had my filly, "Shilo" for about two months now. She is 15 months old, and honestly has come a long way considering she was never weaned or even haltered before I picked her up.

I have now gotten her into some good habits with leading, haltering, allowing me to catch her etc, but now I am having issues with her biting me.

When I went to go look at her during purchasing, she did grab my shirt and bit my boot while I was paying attention to another horse. I thought maybe this was for attention. Now I have been bitten in the butt, pretty badly while bathing her, and she is sneaky about it. I shmucked her in the butt as soon as she did it, and she hasn't bitten badly since, but she will try and I catch her slowly lifting her lip to grab me. She will do it if you are not watching, and now sometimes slyly looking face to face. I don't understand why?

I try to listen to her, and it's not an aggressive bite (anymore) as the last bite was a scrape of the teeth on my shoulder, but bad manners nonetheless.

I need to know why she is doing this and how to correct it, as it seems not to be a test of authority. She backs up when she is told, she eases up out of my space when told, I have her trotting on command, and she will stay out of my territory on command while we are beginning to learn to lunge. She's saucy, she is and sometimes needs re-direction or correction but never more than a nudge, push, hard word, or a tap of the leg to pick up.

I just don't get it, it's as though she just can't help herself to put her teeth on your skin. If I say EH! loudly she stops, but thats when I catch her. I want her to stop!

I can't imagine people would taste good :)

Answer:I did an article on Nip, bite or nuzzle, you can read it on my Articles page of my web site. This does not sound right the way you explain it. You see this through your filters so I may see this different than you. If this horse bites you, you need to smack it hard in the mouth not tap it on the butt. I let my horses nuzzle me and lip me, but they know if teeth touch me, the get smacked. If this horse bites you hard, it is disrespect or a test and either is unacceptable. You have allowed this, you have not corrected it hard enough, so the horse thinks it is ok. With that said, all young horses are mouthy and they explore with their lips, I do not like to discourage this, so you have to weigh this and decide how to deal with it.

Rick

Question: I read a one of your recent responses to someones query about dealing with their horse which spooked on the road and you advsied not to make the horse stand still but to help it know that you understood its fear but you didn't really give any advice on how you do that.....what should I do if my horse spooks at something in the hedge when I am riding and turns its bottom out into the middle of the road or refuses to go forward past the object. Generally I stop and pat her and then push her on but what do you advise, what is teh correct way to deal with it to give the horse confidence yet stay safe to avoid any clashes with traffic?

Answer: I often give advice that seems many don't understand since I "think like a horse". If you read my website and study the horse you would understand my answers better. My web site has over 400 pages of Free information. Yet most people want me to write that much on each of their questions. Your horse's safety and your safety depends on YOU, not the horse. The horse is doing what you tell her and being where you make her be. Your horse is telling you she is nervous, scared, that she does not trust you enough to ignore or control her fear, she is telling you that you have not prepared her right, that you have demonstrated that you are a good leader she should follow and listen too. You are not hearing this since you don't understand her, much like you will not get this answer since you don't understand where I am coming from.

Stopping and petting her may be ok, it could be right if it works, but the horse is saying it does not work so you need to change what you do. You want me to tell you what to change, I can't do that since depending on the horse does, each time you change what you do, will depend on what you do next, you have know, you have to adjust, you have to understand, so I could tell you anything and it may or may not work, but if you really understand horses, you would know what to do, how to adjust, how to set the horse up for success and to take the time it takes so it will take less time.

Taking a horse to traffic and trying to stay safe is not very smart or safe. You don't know the danger you are putting your horse and you in and as always, the horse will pay for your mistakes. A horse does not know a car will kill him, but he will run blindly to avoid it if you put him in a situation too fast where you cause his fear to turn into survival flight.

Read my site, invest time in your horse and yourself by reading it, it will help you more you will know. Then if you have questions about what you read, let me know.

Question: Good afternoon, I recently bought a freisian yongest 2.5 year old colt. I had this horse vetted before I made the purchase but sadly it wasn't disclosed that this horse wind sucked. I only discovered this nasty habit a few days later. He has come to a loving home where he roams freely on our small holding and has access to lots of good hay and lovely feed.

We have tried to establish a pattern of when the wind sucking occurs and it seems to be after he has eaten, almost like a smoker who likes to light up after a meal.

The advice we have had has been very divided and the collar route for us doesn't seem to be an option.

Any further help would be much appreciated, apart from this nasty vice he is a beautifully chilled relaxed horse.

Many thanks

Answer:Other horses and free roaming will stop this, most horses do this from habit and from being locked up and bored to death. They make a cribbing paint or you can wrap hot wire or

hot tape (electric shock)around everything he cribs on, so every time he tries he gets shocked. It sounds mean, but this habit is not only annoying it is bad for his health. It can cause colic and other issues. Turn this horse out in a herd and it will go away. This is a cruel habit created by cruel people who want to lock a horse up in stall, and keep a horse as a pet like a caged dog so they can visit the horse an hour a day. Now the horse has to live with it for life while the jerks who caused it get to move on. If you keep this horse locked up in a stall, I don't think you can stop it, a horse is a herd animal that needs other horses, they only sleep maybe 2 hours a day that means they have 22 hours to be caged, not a good life and that is why all these horrible stall vices occur such as pacing, swaying, cribbing, wind sucking, stomping, kicking walls, being aggressive and protective of their stall.....all caused by humans that claim to love their horse.

The reason you compare this to a smoker is the wind sucking is said to cause a release of endorphins that give the horse a high, and in fact it is an addiction to these endorphins, which is why once it starts it is hard, if not impossible to break.

Question: I recently bought 3 horses from a family who couldn't afford to keep them, the horses were all but neglected. Anyways, two of the three are great horses, awesome personalities, gentle et... but the 9 yr. old is extremely skittish, its a chore to catch him, and often scary to do so, but once caught he seems to do ok...until you tie him, he leads great and is very gentle, however once tied he freaks! Almost ripping the hitchin post out of the ground, he will stand untied and be saddled, but dont try to tie him! He will be used for Trail riding and hunting, How do I break him of this as he will need to be tied in the mountains. Also he freaks when coming near the trailer, he acts as though he was beat with a lead or tied up for extremely long periods of time? In both situations he takes it to the point of almost hurting himself, He has tons of potential if we can get past this, anything you have that could help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Answer: All horses will tie and all will not tie.....the difference is who is tying them.. I have a page on my web site Tying a horse, make sure and use a good rope halter and NO snaps on lead rope. If you have a big tree, tie him to it and let him pull away. He will get tired and figure out that pulling only gets him tired and gets his neck sore, he will stop pulling. Just don't let him get free once you tie him or he will learn to fight, which is probable what has happened or when he freaked out someone untied him so he learned that freaking out gets him untied.

You may be right about beating at the trailer, but you have to start over, I also have a page on trailer loading on my site.

Since you are asking these questions, I think you will find lots of info on my site, try reading it often, it is pretty big what if you read it all, you will know more about horses than most people.

Question:QUESTION: Our 4-H and sheriffs dept rescued several neglected horses of which one was about a 2-3 month old filly (nearly dead) and the mare had to be put down because she was to far gone. Anyway, about 2 weeks of 4-H nursing her back, we adopted her. She is coming along so wonderfully. She took to a halter right away without any hesitation, she walks and leads and of course now and then puts up a little fuss while walking but it is only for a second or two. When walking, on a bad day she will try to walk against us but we are working on that. We also starting picking up her feet in the beginning and a week ago started picking them. No fuss with that either. Every day gets better with her. I don't know if I am trying to teach her to much at one time. What are your thoughts on this. Thank You in Advance.

ANSWER: No, I think you are fine, young horses are like sponges, they take in a lot. You cannot teach this horse how to be a horse, only another horse can do that, so let it be with horses as much as possible. Horses that are raised by people and no other horses, make really bad horses and end up hurting people and themselves. So make sure she has a horse buddy, is turned out with other horses and spends more time with horses than people.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Thank you so much for your answer. I just wanted you to know that today we tied her up for about 15 mins. and just sat there and watched her just in case of a problem. She did so well. Didnt put up a fuss either. What is your feeling about tying this young and for what duration of time. Also you stated she should have a horse buddy, I also have a 25 yr old mare and my mare's 6 yr old gelding. My filly is actually in the pen next to my mare and every morning we turn the three of them out for about 20 mins. while we clean their pens. Is it okay that I have her in a separate pen next to my mare or should I open up her pen to my mare's

for closer contact. Thanks in advance.

Answer: I would put them together if you can, close contact is not the same as a herd, by keeping them apart she cannot make mistakes and the older horse cannot teach or correct her.. Horses only sleep about 2 hours per day, that leaves 22 hours to get bored, that time needs to be spent with other horses teaching, grazing, socializing, playing and growing and moving. Just make sure you are tying her with a good rope halter so she can't break any buckles or snaps, she is going to get bored or scared and try and pull away, she has to learn that pulling does not get her free, if she gets free, she will pull more and more, so make sure when you tie her, she cannot get away. Trying is good, do things to her while tied. Groom her, give her grain, pick her feet, sit and read a book with her, even have her move so she will have to give to pressure and know she is tied.

Question:I grew up on a horse farm, albeit many years ago, in KY. I am now in Oklahoma and have been for the past 30 years. My neighbors have a small tract of land, and a 3 horses. There really isn't enough room for these horses, but in general, they seem to be tended to, exercised and they have an overall good appearance. My concern is, that I just noticed a lady chasing one of the horses with a canvas looking cloth. Later that evening while driving by, I notice the horse was wearing this canvas type cloth over his eyes.

I understand how blinders work, to keep the horse from being distracted by side views, but I have never seen a horse completely blinded. The horse is walking around and eating today, but still with the blinder on. It has been a day and a half now, and though, I don't know the people, I have never suspected neglect or abuse, but I am very curious as to what purpose the blindfold serves.

I don't remember ever seeing this in KY, however, it has been alot of years ago. Perhaps I missed something.

I have searched for the answer to this question, but they all go back to the winker/blinders. Again, I know the purpose of those, but this is different.

If you could put my mind to rest about this, I won't worry about the horse and mind my own business.

Thanks for any information you can give.

Answer: Are you sure it is not a fly mask. If it is a burlap bag, these people may not be able to afford a fly mask and they are using the bad to keep flies out of the eyes or an open cut. There is an old cowboy thing of blindfolding a horse to train. Not a great concept but it can be used to teach a horse some things. Not good if they are just letting it run lose.

It sounds like you care about these horses, so I would suggest you go introduce yourself, say you like horses and have not been around them in many years, and ask if it would be OK for you to bring them an apple or carrots once in a while. Then you get a closer look, maybe you will see that they are hurting for money and then you could buy a bail of hay or a bag of oats and help these horses out. Maybe they don't know, maybe they are not taking care of them and this way you can get a closer look and then report them if need be.

I would do it for the horses and who knows it may work out good for everyone, especially the horses..... :)

QUESTION: I have a quarter horse that only pulls back when I try to saddle him. I can high line him and I can tie him up once the saddle is on. He only does this when trying to saddle him. What can I do. He has broken a few lead ropes. I have to back him up to a fence or have someone hold him to saddle him. He has to be held to do so. It is difficult for me to throw the saddle up with one hand and hold with the other if I am saddling him by my self. Any help would be appreciated.

ANSWER: This is a you issue not a horse issue. I always take the horse's side since it is never the horse's fault. You say he broke a lead rope, I say you did not have him tied right with a good lead rope and halter, so you set the horse up to fail by doing this and he pulled and got away, so you taught the horse that you cannot tie him, so now he will pull more, had he not got away, he would not pull now, but you taught him to pull and get release by pulling since you used a cheap or incorrect lead rope. So now you want to think this is a horse issue, this is a you issue. This horse pulls and moves and tries to prevent you saddling him since he knows he is smarter than you, he knows you are not smart enough to stop him, he gets away with it so he thinks it is the right answer, you let him get away with it and teach him it is the right answer.

A does what it does because we do what we do. If you change the horse will change.

I could spend 10 mins with this horse and he would stand still, let me saddle him and he would do it without being tied.... why, because I would show him I am the high horse, he has to listen to me and I am the lead horse. I could get a horse to understand this in 10 mins, it would take me years to teach you. Only you can learn to think like a horse.

If you read my web site, it will help you understand horse better and then this problem will go away. You are looking at this problem and I see this is only a symptom of you not understanding horses.

QUESTION: hi. i watched a video of yours on how to teach a horse to back up under saddle. well your training worked but my horse backs up really really slow. its not even as fast as her regular walk. is this normal will she improve i have only been doing it like for two weeks or do i need to watch your video one more time to make sure i am doing it right.

ANSWER: My video was very short and just was an example. You have to make sure your horse knows a cue to speed up, if you go slow and help the horse understand you get she will get faster, not sure why you need her to go faster. But you may want to teach her on the ground and have her back up faster when you click and say back and put more pressure so she learns how to back faster.

I would not get too caught up on a fast back up, if you do it right, over time your horse will get better and the faster will come naturally.

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: thank you thats what i wanted to no she dont even back up as fast as the horse in your video.she takes one step at a time like 5 secs apart. so i thought i was doing something wrong. i appreciate your advice and time it is helpful.

Answer: Your welcome, remember horses in the wild do not back up very much, it is not safe and they can't see where they are going or where they are putting their feet. So the back up is a human thing and it will take time for them to get used to it.

She will get, try and have her do it more when you are on the ground when she wants to get somewhere. Like if she really wants to get to her food, have her back up a few steps to get to the food, if she wants to get to pasture, have her back up the last few steps to the gate, that way she will want to speed up and it will be her idea, horses learn better that way.

Question: Bought an 11 year old Arabian gelding couple years ago. Rode well at first, then decided no one would mount him anymore. Worked him in round pen for quite awhile. He has great ground manners but still, lets you saddle him, but throws you off immediately upon trying to mount. Vet has checked him out and seems ok. Anything I can do short of getting in an expert who doesn't mind getting busted up? Thanks.

Answer: Your question tells me that since you had the horse for two years and I would guess you would not buy a horse that did this, it seems to me that you taught the horse to do the things it is doing. A horse is only a reflection of who is handling it. You taught this for two years and you are looking for a fix over an email, won't happen. A horse will only do what it is allowed to do. You said something about an expert (not a big fan of that word), but if you get someone that understand horses, a horseman, they will not get busted up. Since they know horse they will understand this horse has not had good direction and is doing what it does because of what is being done to him.

The horse is the only expert of knowing horses, since you think this is a horse problem, you do not understand horses and I always tell people, it is never the horses fault. This horse is telling you, you don't understand horses, he is telling you that you are not a good leader, he is telling you that he does not trust or respect you, but you can hear this or understand it since you don't speak horse.

Read my website from start to finish and you will see horses differently and maybe realize that you caused everything this horse is doing and only you can fix it.

Q: Brief history of the equine in question: 16.1, 12 y/o, TB, 3rd level Dressage, and was a successful show jumper- breeding stallion. Was shown over 5' jumps, but his career ended because of lack of care. His sale price was \$36K but no one would buy him. He refused jumps and had a few accidents during training that hurt his legs. I waited for him at the rescue he was sent to. When he arrived at the rescue he had only three shoes on, his hooves were grossly grown out, his heels were underslung, he had wounds on his legs, he was lame because he was nearly walking on his heel bulbs, one coronet injury, a hoof abscess, and bruised soles (he has white feet). I brought him home and he could hardly walk for three weeks.

Question: After his rescue, he is vet checked, massaged, properly shod (but the vet said his feet will never be as they were prior to neglect), and sound. He is performing beautifully as a Dressage horse, moving into very advanced and difficult movements. I had also wanted to jump with him, but he practically has a breakdown when he feels he's going to be forced to jump- very low jumps, I might add. He doesn't even like trotting poles. If he touches a pole on the ground it shatters him. When we come to a vertical I can feel him become tense under me, snorts, over jumps it, then goes into a (Thoroughbred) running fit like we're at the track. I haven't punished him (I don't hit), and when I pull him up during a fit he froths at the mouth and quivers. You have more expertise than I do, so I won't shove my speculations down your throat. I've treated the situation like he's had a harsh past. He's very familiar with the arena and the jumps being there, and the only time he has a freak-out is when he knows he's supposed to be jumping those obstacles. I saw him perform a few years ago as a show jumper with one of his former trainers and they placed well in the competition- he was in great health at that time.

I spend 5 days a week with him, 8 hours per day, I know him very well, he knows my aids, and we're very close. While I school him in Dressage we're in harmony and he tries very hard to understand what I want when I want him to do it. So, my point is, asking professionals their opinion on the matter is a last ditch effort concerning jumping. I am perfectly fine with retiring him from jumping and showing him in Dressage, I just need to know if I am completely missing the point somewhere?

I'm not impatient, I just want to make sure I'm not making the situation worse. For that reason, I haven't jumped him recently. It's not his fault. I love him, I have ever since I first saw him, and I want to make the best decisions possible in his interest.

Answer: I have to think you have not read my website or read any of my other answers. I am about the horse. I despise jumping horses. It tears down their legs, joints, muscles, it is unnatural, painful and destroys horses. Asking me if I think you should jump a horse is like me asking you should you slam a car door on your hand, the answer is very obvious. Many many people say they love their horse and then do things that I see as abusive and mean. Love is relative just because someone says it, does not make it so. If you were a horse, if you lived as a horse, if you understood a horse and was connected to a horse, you would not like jumping. This is a human, ego, competitive, win sport at the total expense and pain of the horse. Since most jumpers that 'love' their horses don't understand what it does to a horse, they justify it or rationalize it and as always, the horse pays for it.

Think about it, a 1200 pound animal that normally walks on four small hooves and thin legs suddenly gets dropped on only two hooves and legs, then you put steel plants on the feet for the horse to land on which only compounds the impact and pressure and damage, then you add a 150-200 pound rider, then you add speed and then you do it over and over to look good and all the while your horse is in pain and paying a severe cost. Do this exercise then tell me jumping does not hurt a horse. Get on a chair in your house and jump off, not straight down, jump up off the chair and land on two feet. Then do again and hold one foot up (cutting your support in half, just like you do to the horse) and land on only one foot, then after you do that, move the chair on concrete and land on one foot (like landing on steel shoes), then, run to the chair and do it again landing on one foot, then after you tell me it is not that bad, put a 40 pound weight in a back pack, strap it to your back and do it again. Then do it every day, ten or 20 times a day for a week, then if you can walk after the first day, tell me how great and beautiful it is to make a horse do it.

This horse has been abused, hurt, neglected and had a sh**y life thanks to people who loved him. MY OPINION, is if you love this horse, you would get rid of his shoes, good barefoot trims, nice friendly rides NOT in an arena, allow him to enjoy spending time with you, not

working, not trying to fit into some category or rules and just take rides in fields where he can graze, walk and enjoy being with a human that is not constantly requiring something from him. And when you are not grooming him or being his herd buddy, you keep him out of a stall and in the biggest open area you can and you let him hang out and be and play with other horses when not with you. I say this since if I was a horse, that is where I would want to be.

Read my bad horsemanship page, my horse history page and my horsemanship page, it will explain why I see horses the way I do.

Question: I have an issue regarding a colt born to one of my mares this year. He was unexpected. We are not sure how long he was out in the field before he was found Easter friday. The problem I am having is that he is a bit on the wild side and wants nothing to do with us. I was hoping you might have some advice on the best way to halter train him with minimal risk to him or to us.

Thanks Amanda

Answer: Well the fact that you could be surprised concerns me more than a young horse that you cannot get a halter. All horses are on the wild side. How can someone not know a mare is pregnant for 11 months and then not know the horse suddenly lost a lot of weight and then just find a baby in the field? These things are not something that should be happening to responsible horse owners. Didn't this mare get shots, seen by a vet, have her feet done, given baths when hot, checked for injuries???? Explain this a little more so I know I am not wasting my time helping you.

Question: I just bought a horse and I do not have any other horses, and I am getting ready to bring her home soon. I cannot buy a goat because we have dogs in the area, coyotes and bobcats that would kill a goat. I do not want to get more horses or any other animals for a stablemate. Years ago I had a horse that lived without any horses or stablemates and he was a happy, well adjusted horse. How often does this happen, that a horse does not need a stablemate? What kind of symptoms would a horse have that needed a stablemate? Thank you.

Answer: Horses do not feel safe alone, they need other prey animals to keep watch and help them relax, sleep and feel safe, to share the work load, which is why horses are not solitary animals, they Herd animals, not pets, not meant to be alone. In my opinion, getting a horse knowing you are going to keep it alone is selfish and not fair to the horse, but many people do it. I don't agree with it. The damage is too large to explain in one email, read my horsemanship page and my bad horsemanship page and it will explain it.

Question: G'Day

i have a rising 4 year old gelding, with a great temperament, unfortunately he has grown very attached to a mare we already had. i am starting to campdraft the horse and he wants to go straight back to her on the fence or back at the float.

i have managed through persistence to get him to go away of late, but yesterday after a ride with my daughter, he turned it on, as i have had them separated for 7 - 10 hoping this will fix the issue.

i have only been riding for about 2 years, and have come off him once, i find if i stop him back him up and turn the way i want to go he normally walks off. the horse is a quarter/stock horse. i look forward to your reply, advice.

regards

Answer: Your horse is being normal, no big surprise here. He is still a baby and growing until five. He will be insecure and nervous when away from the horse that keeps him safe and he spends most time with. If you visited me and I took you to downtown Oakland, CA and then left you, you would feel lost and insecure too.

Understand horses better will help you to help this horse. When training a young new horse, you should have a good second horse with you, so the horse can learn to trust you while stilling the comfort of another horse with him. I would let his friend tag along on the rides, she will follow and they both get exercise or have someone ride her and you just follow her with the young horse. This is all about teaching the horse nice and slow and not pushing or forcing him to his fear. If you fight this and try and force this with the horse by himself you will only

create more and bigger problems.

Work this from the horse's point of view not yours. Stop thinking like a human who wants to train a horse and think like a horse that is young, scared, insecure and trying to stay alive.

Read my website and do some sacking out, I discuss this on my horsemanship page.

Question: I read your website but have a question. My horse use to be in a hurry to get back to the barn so we went riding a lot coming and going and now its not a problem when we ride alone. Yesterday I went riding with friends and the horses were walking faster than us on the way back. I need your help because I don't want my horse to get back into bad habits so what can I do so I can ride with my frinds and not be in a hurry

Answer: Don't ride with bad riders that let their horse do bad things. Any horse will want to keep up when another horse is acting nervous, insecure or in a hurry since horses like to stay alive and their herd instincts take over, when they see another horse (apparently) reacting to a possible threat. A smart horse will not want to be in the back of another horse running from something that might eat him.

Your horse should listen to you, but you will fighting lots of survival instincts and I would rather not fight with my horse if I can prevent it. With that said, I don't let my horse dictate who I ride or how fast they go. So like most of my answers, this if a you issue, you need to get better, you need to show this horse it has to listen to you, you need to be able to communicate with this horse and make him not want to be in a hurry.

You are working against some strong draws (see my article on draw) so if you were better your horse would be better. Your horse is telling you that it will listen to you when another horse is not telling him to be nervous. Since you can't control other riders or other horses, this is a tricky one and you have to decide what you gain and what you lose by doing what you do?

Question: My neighbors bought a few horses this month, a first they both seemed health after a week or two both horses have started having coughing spells. The horses didn't come from the same place so I'm confused at to why they both have a cough. These symptoms didn't start until after a few rainy days. Both have been on trail rides since being here but neither coughed while working. I have had horses all my life and they came to me for help. I told them that it may have been from the hay they have been getting. However the hay isn't very dusty, just mildly like all hay is. Can you help me?

Answer: They could just have a cold type virus, one may have had it and gave it to the other one. If they do not have a temp, if they are still eating and real lethargic, let it work out over a couple of weeks. If it gets worse, they have blood from nose, stop eating and drinking, then call a vet. If they get abscesses on the neck or throat area, it may be stranglers, but they will have a high fever, call a vet.

I would make sure they had free access to hay so they can eat all the want when they want, maybe some extra carrots and apples, and I like to give my boys some oats and rice bran when they are fighting something, just some extra energy food to keep their system up and working.

I would not work them hard, but some exercise is good.

Q: My 5 year old Rocky Mountain mare has kicked at other horses 3 times this summer. She has only done this when moving faster than a walk. It appears that she is competitive and does not like to be passed. This dangerous behavior is totally unacceptable. What is the best method to extinguish this behavior?

ANSWER: Like most horse problems this is a people issue. You want to see this as your horse is kicking other horses, I see this as you are not paying attention, you are not controlling him, you have not taught him that he should not and can not do that, you are allowing other horses to get too close, you are not keeping your horse far enough away to prevent or stop him, you are not giving good enough direction to the horse so it knows not to do this, you are not being a strong enough leader so the horse is ignoring you. So it all depends on how you

look at it. From your view it is the horse, from my way it is you. If you can't control this horse so it does not do this, it is only a matter of time until the horse does other things you don't want, since it does not respect you as leader.

You did not say this in your question and did not give me much info on your experience or how long you have had the horse. My guess is that the horse started this behavior with you or after you had it for a while, since I am pretty sure you would not buy a horse that you knew would be kicking other horses. If that is true then that makes the point that you caused this by not paying attention, not knowing this was going to happen and not stopping it, preventing it or making sure the horse knows that it is unacceptable.

Again my guess is this is not the only thing this horse does that you do not want it do. You ask for the best method, the best method for all horse problems is to look to yourself, see what you are doing to cause it, what you are not doing to prevent it and where the lack of communication and understand break down is. There are lots of way to stop this, first being pay attention, if I put my horses head in another horse's butt or face he can't kick a horse he is facing, if I hit my horse on the butt anytime his butt goes towards another horse, he will learn that putting his butt at another horse gets him a stinging butt, if I make my horse face a horse every time he thinks about kicking, he will get tired of that, if I make my horse run away and stop and back up and run back to a horse every time he tries to kick, he will soon connect that to kicking and he will not want to kick since he does not want to work hard when he tries. If you notice a common trend here, everything I have said is dependent on YOU and what you do. Which is why it is never the horses fault.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: I realize the answer is me, that is why I asked the question, "what is the best method". I wanted to know what I could do, and did not feel I was blaming my horse. I have had horses for 20+ years and this is the first horse I have ever had this problem with. I bought her as a yearling and have been riding her for slightly over one year on the trail. She is ridden at least twice a week and to date she has well over 1000 miles on the trail. You are right, this is not the only thing she has done. As I resolve one issue she moves on to the next. One example is, stopping on the trail when she is not confident to rub her head on her leg. This was resolved by catching her before she dropped her head. When running she kicks out very quickly, I was paying attention and still was not able to catch her fast enough. The horses she kicked at were far enough away to barely be reached, however I can only ride my own horse and have no control over the other horses. I have been doing the things you have suggested, and wanted your opinion on the BEST method. I thought perhaps you had some insight that I did not. Thank you for telling me what I already knew, in a not very nice way.

Answer: Silly me, I always get questions from people that know so much and they always only tell me AFTER I ANSWER THE QUESTIONS how much they know.

If you think that was not nice maybe when your horse throws you, you can say he was not nice either. You are the only owner of this horse, anything bad this horse does is a result of you. Since I can't fix you and you know so much, keep your questions to yourself or ask someone else. Your horses would say these things to you if it could talk, but I am sure you would tell him how much you know and would ignore anything he said. Which is why you are having these problems. So thanks for making my point. You = only owner = all problems belong to you = you telling me how much you know.

I have a choice to tell you to take a hike, unfortunately your horse cannot. He is stuck with you and all your knowledge.

Good day!

Mouthing and Nips:

I always tell people not to get caught up too much in a horse's past. Not sure what is going on or can just stick to basic horse communication, it usually works. A horse does not bite, kick or strike a human where, no how, so I would handle this as a disrespect issues and push this horse back fast and hard.

you address it like he just tried to kill you. If you don't stop this now he will think he is higher and will lower member of his herd and will treat you like that. Which means he will tell you when and where you don't he will correct you like he would a horse, with a bite or kick. He is NOT being mean he is being mean the horse feels safe he has to try and move up in the herd as high as he can. There are benefits in being high to know, he is not higher and he cannot bite or kick you or any other person.

As for a disruptive herd member, the herd will take care of that, we people tend to want to help and protect our horses and we end up making it worse by trying to help. Let the herd deal with him, his dealings and behavior of you.

Licking is not bad, my young horse does this as well, especially when I am sweaty, he likes the salt. It does not matter to me and I let him, he never bits. I just did an article on this topic.

[Article on Nips](#)

Being so young, she may miss her mom and horses that young are very mouthy and use their lips as we use our fingers to feel and explore. If you want her to stop, you can tap her nose and tell her "Quit", that way she will learn the word quit and you can use it in later training.

I would let her be a young filly and just enjoy the bonding and I think it will make your relationship closer for later training.

He is in his terrible twos, you have let him know now that his behavior is unacceptable. I would put him in pasture with as many horses as you can, forget same age, it better to let some old mares teach him some manners and push him around. If he is only you and people he will soon learn that he can push people around and not respect anyone. let him get schooled by some other horses, he may get a few bites and hoof marks, but it will teach him manners like you cannot.

When you say drags you, I say you let him drag you, you can either let go and he can run away or you can take his head away hard by yanking it to his butt and then release pressure. Don't keep pulling or he will pull, yank and release, if you are using a piece of junk Web halter, get rid of it and get you a good Rope Halter, see my rope halter page. Also tie him good and do lots of sacking out while tied, see my sacking out section on my horsemanship page.

You have to use your mind and not your strength.

Subject: Biting: www.thinklikeahorse.org **Question:** Hi, I am boarding a friend's horse because she has not other place to board it. Yesterday he pitched a fit with her. She was trying to take off his shoe because it was loose and the next thing I knew he was trying to pull his bridle off his head, he succeeded. I think she is too aggressive with him and the horse is not trained properly. What I would like to know is how best to teach this horse to keep his hoof up so that "we" can do anything that needs to be done, done safely? I have trained horses in the past but this is a friend's horse that has little patience. What can I do?

Answer: Tell her she is being too rough and not understanding. Tell her she is causing the problems and let you try. A horse is a reflection of the person handling it. You did not say how old she was, what her experience is, how old the horse is and other helpful information, but it sounds like most horse problems, they are not really horse problems they are people problems.

If someone was able to put shoes on, then the horse already knows how to stand and let someone handle his feet. So it goes back to the person that shod him knew what they were doing and not the owner does not.

Your friend is basically training this horse to be resistant and now will learn to give the farrier a harder time and she is teaching bad habits that will end up hurting the horse and making the horse pay for her lack of knowledge. She will not listen to you, but since you are keeping her horse at your place you can not allow her to screw up the horse and maybe end up causing the horse to tear up your place. Your barn your rules. My barn, horses are treated fairly and not abused or neglected or you find a new barn.

Sound like an easy fix for you if you really want to stop it, you can.

Rick (you could just show her my answer and make me the bad guy) :)

If you don't mind it, then he is doing what you allow him to do. If you want him to stop, you have to let him that you do not want it. As for bites that is an absolute No NO. He should get popped in his mouth the second he bites or tries to bite. Biting is

disrespectful and is telling you that you are lower and he is higher. You have to tell him no and pop him HARD, don't be easy, don't be nice, don't ask, tell him so there is no confusion and he is clear that biting is absolutely unacceptable, will not be tolerated and will get you hit hard in the mouth. It should only take one or two times if you do it hard, if you do it easy, then it will take 15 or 20 times and the horse will be confused.

I let my horses get close to me, nuzzle me, rub on me and get in my space, I don't have a problem with it and know I can stop it if I need to, but some people don't like to allow it ever, it is a personal choice. All you have to do is be consistent make sure your horse knows what you want and give him clear and consistent signals and cues.

Mules:

Hi Floyd, my experience with Mules are limited. I have heard some interesting things about them, the ones I have worked with appear to be the same as horses. Mules are considered more thinking animals. They will not let you abuse them like a horse will. Mules tend to be more thinkers and evaluators. They do not instinctively run like horses do when in fear. A mules tends to stop, freeze, and evaluate. After they size of the situation they then decide to fight or flee. Many people say once you ride a mule you will never want a horse again. For those reasons they are said to be more of a one owner type horse, but if treated right they can be handled by different people, if treated wrong they will kick your butt and remember. Their kicks are said to be much more accurate than a horse.

As for like a dog, I think horses are like dogs when treated right. No Equine is like a dog when it comes to time, care and expenses. Horses require much more than a dog and I trained dogs for in the military for 18 years, so I know dogs pretty well. The reason so many new horse owners get out of horses (80%) in the first year is most people have no clue and when they find out how time and effort it takes they get out.

A draft mule would be good, they can go 1500 pounds or more or a draft horse would do. They say a horse can comfortably carry 20 percent of their weight. Depending on their level of shape, muscle and experience. However if you lost some weight your balance would improve, your health would improve and you could get back in the saddle easier. I know if I dropped 20 or 30 pounds I would ride better and my horse would be happier. :)

ANSWER: You have to stop thinking they are just pets. All horses need to be handled so you can doctor them if hurt, trim their feet, lead them from danger. So you need to understand horses (equines) so you will know how to handle them and get them to trust you. I have never worked with a donkey, but they are part of the equine family so they should respond accordingly. Read my web site, especially the herd behavior section and the sacking out section. This will help you understand pressure and release. These guys know since they let the other owner do it, so you need to learn or ask the old own to help you out or call a farrier who may be willing to work on them for extra money or you need to spend time and learn yourself so you can help them.

Since you have horses, are they kept together? Seeing you handle and halter your horses will them to learn you will not hurt them. If you are handling horses, these guys should be no different. I have an abused mustang that was very hard to handle and even thou I don't ride him I still push him around, move him, and make sure he sees me as his leader and as a higher horse. But he is much like a pet. Treating them like a pet is not bad if you can do the other things they need. If I let this mustang go for a year without handling him he would be near impossible to handle, but I do his feet, I give him shots, I doctor his cuts, so I have to spend some time maintaining my higher position so he will allow me to do those things. It does not matter what you use them for, my point was you have to spend as much time as needed to get the job done so you can care for them. Unfortunately, there are not short cuts with horses that don't involve brutal means, force and pain. So to avoid those methods, you need to spend time and understanding. There are many other good sites out there so read lots, but you have to do with horses to learn, just reading makes it sound so easy and simple, but there much more. If you have raised kids or know someone who has, can you imagine someone writing and saying my child is 16 years old and won't listen to me, how can I get her to listen? I feel that way sometime when people write and say my horse won't ???, can you tell how?

Rearing:

If a horse is rearing you are causing it. It appears you have prepared this horse so it does not know what you want or you have shown it that you are the leader or it was weaned early and is running to you for protection, or you are sacking out too aggressively and have not taught it to accept it properly, or you are doing something else. As you can tell, everything comes back to you, a horse is only a reaction to what we do, so if we get the wrong response then we did not teach it right or did not prepare the horse right, or you are not doing something right. This is a young horse and is trying to learn, but someone has to talk to him in horse talk not in human talk. You are this horse needs to be a herd of two, you have know how to behave and act in a herd. Read my horsemanship page on my site.

This is not a horse problem it is a people problem.

The people leading him are the problem. This happens a lot in barns where horses have multiple handlers. Every person handles a horse differently, some worse than others. Not sure what a lead shank is but if that is stupid chain over the nose or under the chin, commonly known as a stud chain, then you are going to make this horse mean and soon he will be striking more. Pain is often substituted for lack of knowledge or lack of ability. The second thing that I absolutely disagree with is separating the horse from the herd, that is another thing that will raise the drive of the horse and will make him harder to handle. If the barn manager is stupid to lead a horse then don't make your horse pay. Horses step on people and act like horses, all horses will rear if they are allowed or caused to rear, just another example of horses having to pay for people not knowing what they doing. Getting kicked out this barn may be the best thing for your horse. If others can't handle your horse then maybe you be handling him more. Locking a horse up, away from a herd is wrong and the horse does not deserve this. The fact that the "barn manager" is now scared of him, is probably the reason he did what he did. Perhaps she should stick to management and leave the horse handling to people who are not scared. The old saying "you can't fix stupid" seems to pop up a lot in the horse world. So don't try and fix a horse that is not broke. Good luck trying to fix people with titles like barn manager, trainer, life long horse owner, and I been riding horses since I was kid people....

When horses develop problems or issues as we call them, they are normally caused by the person handling them. If a horse rears with me, I caused it. If a horse was not rearing before, then I caused it. A horse is nothing but a reflection of it's handling. Yes there are a few exceptions, but very far and few. So I would say your trainer caused this or let people ride the horse that caused it.

If I gave a horse to a trainer, which I would never do, and the horse developed a bad habit, it is only reasonably that the trainer caused it. If you give me a horse and it was not rearing before and then I call you and say, your horse is rearing, guess who caused this. This seems really simple to me. Then again, if I was charging you for a service and I knew you were not too horse savvy, then I could tell you, opps, for no reason, your horse started rearing, but it is not me, it is your horse.... I say it all the time, it is never the horse's fault.

I don't know the trainer, I don't know the horse, I don't know you, so please don't tell me how good your trainer is, how good your horse is, it is my opinion that the horse is never to blame and that horses do not start something unless someone has taught it them.

I have a section on rearing on my site, read it and it might give you some ideas. A horse will not rear if he can go forward and does not feel trapped. Most rearing is due to bits that hurt, improper training, and a lack of understanding of a horse.

This can be one of the most dangerous things a horse does. Never pull on both reins together, only one rein so the horse will always turn and not back up and rear. It is harder for a horse to rear when going forward or left or right. However this is not a easy fix and I would need more info to try and help. I ask that you provide the requested information that is posted where you type your question.

This is a serious and dangerous problem. You did not provide the requested information that I requested at the top of where you type the question.

Horses normally don't flip over unless they are pulled and are give too much pressure and they

cannot find release from the pressure. I need more info to answer this better.

First it is a young horse and does not know much. Rearing is a thing that is caused normally by rough hands, painful bits, poor riding or lack of understanding of a horse. A horse will not rear if it can move forward. So when it rears it is saying I don't want to go where you are trying to force me, I am nervous or scared and don't know what you want, so since I am confused and don't know what to do, and since I can't go forward or backwards or left or right, I will try and go up to get you to stop pressure. You need to realize that you are causing this and you can stop it or prevent it.

ANSWER: This is your problem and not the horses. Most rearing is caused by rough hands and someone being too tight on the bit. A rear happens with a horse wants to go forward and a rider tries to hold him back, if you understood horses better you know that holding a horse too much will cause a rear. If you redirect the horse and not try and hold him back the rearing would stop. You also said the horse does not care about hurting itself, of course she does, no horse wants to hurt themselves, but with a bit comes pain and with pain a horse does things that will hurt them. A horse will run off a cliff if you scare it enough or cause enough pain.

Question: I have a 16yr old TB mare. I have known her for 7 years now. I bought her about 5 years ago and had her for 3 of those years and never had an issue with her. She was stolen from me and I just recently found her and got her back. For some reason When ever she is tied she freaks, rears, falls, and gets hurt. I have been tacking her in her stall or just having her stand with the rope over her neck but I really want to be able to work through her problem without her getting hurt! What should I do?

Answer: You say she freaks out, she is scared and may be telling you that she does not trust or respect you enough to be tied. I have a web page on tying a horse, read that and it will help.

You say she rears, I say you are not tying her short enough to stop her from rearing. Tie her short with a good rope halter, NO buckles or snaps that can break, and when she pulls freaks or falls, just stand back and DON'T get involved or help, let her figure out that pulling gets her nothing. Just be there in case you need to help, but don't help unless she stops moving and jumping. You have to make sure and tie her safely so can't get hurt when she jumps around, she will get tired of pulling.

Question: Hi, My 14 month old shetland filly has just started rearing when I go into the field. The previous owners said they played the first Parelli game with her, and she is a quite a clingy horse. She prefers humans to the other horse in her field. If I walk around the field she follows me everywhere and as soon as i start to walk away from her she starts to charge, ears back and and rears at me, what is making her change so quickly. As soon as she does this, i will get my her side, crouch down to her level and stroke her neck and she stops. When i stand up again, se will graze around me and stay near but once again, as soon as I am far enough away for her to gather up a charge, she comes for me again. Is it a game to her? I know she needs a lot more training. thanks.

Answer: It sounds like she is playing, but she can hurt you. I play chase with my horse but if he gets too horsey I have to shut him down. If she accidentally gets too close and hits you in the head or back she will break something on you or kill you. She needs to taught that rear is unacceptable. I am sure you like that fact that she follows you, but charging and rearing has too many ways to go bad. And, more importantly, she is learning and will soon learn that she scares you or she can make you move and then she will think she is higher and it will move from playing to telling you to move and when you don't she will try and make you by charging and rearing, then she will get labeled as being mean or aggressive.

Teach her that she can't and that you can stop her so there is no confusion that you are higher and you are in charge. The fact that you are crouching down to her level tells me you don't understand horses and are treating this horse like a dog. You may think you are being nice and clam by getting down, I think the horse see this as she is making you submit and she is making you say you are sorry. It does not matter what you think you are doing or what you plan to do, it only matter what the horses thinks. A horse only respects stronger and smarter, it only respects you if you can move their feet, back them down, make them yield to you, control their movement...horses DO NOT respect love, carrots and pets... this is horse is not mean, is not doing anything wrong, it is simply being a horse and you are being a human, the problem

is both of you are working from your beliefs..... that is the problem, you are smarter and need to really understand a horse so you can work from their point of view not yours.

I would say that 85% of all people with horses are scared of them. That is sad for horses. If people understood them, they would know that a horse is only a horse and is only dangerous when handled by people that don't understand them.

Knowledge is power and knowing helps you deal with fear. You may not agree with this but your horse flipped over because of what you did. Everything a horse does is because of what we do. I don't want to debate this with you, but I assure you that if had not done what you did the horse would not done what it did. You could have slowed down, made sure the trail was safe, kept better balance, seen the danger before it happened, helped the horse....what you did is saddled, ran the horse, made it do what it did, put it in the situation for what happened... you may not want to admit it, but it is true, you had all the options and the had NONE, it did what you told him, made him or caused him to do. This is why people get hurt and fear horses and it is never the horses fault.

Horse know fear since it is the opposite of assertiveness, control, aggressiveness. Horse only respect strong leaders that push them, correct them and make them listen... you will never see a lead horse, begging asking, offering treats to get a horse to trust them.... the lead horse will push, kick, and Make the horse know who is leader and then the lower horse leans, respect and feels better and safer... yet people continue to try and be nice, ask, give carrots, beg, be soft and easy, horses see all this as Weakness and will walk all over these people.

This horse is rearing since you do nothing but get scared when he does it. If you hit his butt, made him run, made him turn and flex his head and did it with force, assertiveness and made it clear to the horse that rearing gets him grief, gets him work, gets him tired and gets you upset, then he would learn Rearing is not fun and he will NOT want to rear. Now, he rears, you get nervous, you freeze, you don't know what to do, you probably get off or try and talk nice to him or let him stand and relax.....all bad and all tell the horse Rearing is good, rearing gets him to relax, rearing is not bad so why should he stop... basically you are teaching him to rear.

Read, study and learn horses, learn about herd behavior, learn about all the things I discuss on my horsemanship page, spend time with horses and once you really understand them you will know how to push back and show them you are boss and all your horse problems will go away and so will your fear.

Thanks for you additional information, but it is also not helpful. It does not matter to me or to your horse who your trainer is. I have worked with many horses with many problems and many of the horses and riders had great trainers. A trainer is not responsible for every problem of their student or the horse that the student is riding. However, if your trainer rides the horse and it rears, I would say it is your trainers fault since he was riding. You said the only time the horse acts right is with your trainer. Which makes my point. If your rears with you, you are causing it. If your does anything wrong when you are riding it, it is your fault. I say it to most everyone and say it to myself, "It is never the horse's fault".

So if you want to believe that my answer was not helpful, I can't help you. I can't help people that just want to make excuses, blame the horse and not accept responsibility for causing the problem. Your trainer is being paid, which makes her your employee, which means that she may not be in the position to be as direct or honest with you as I am. I don't know you, I have never seen you ride and have no reason to argue or get into a debate with you. I am trying to help your horse. Your horse is trying to tell you something. He is rearing and it is dangerous for you. So you keep thinking it is the horse or believe that I don't what I am talking about, but you are the one that is going to get hurt if you don't change something you are doing.

I will bet you a plane ticket and expenses that I got on your horse it would not rear! You can believe it or not, but just for the sake of trying to help your horse, if your horse did not rear when I rode it, would you then agree that the problem is you and not your horse?

So since you horse does not do this when your trainer is there and does when you it is with you without your trainer, what is the difference? Look to yourself for the problem. Work on yourself and your horse will get better. If you understood horses

better, you would already know this.

Lastly, you said you don't find my answer helpful, that is exactly what you horse is telling you. He does not find what you doing helpful, he is confused, he is scared, he is resistant and he is telling you that YOU are doing something wrong. Stop looking at this like a horse problem, look at as your horse sees it. I assure you, your horse sees this as a people problem and I agree with your Horse!**ANSWER:** Like most people that don't understand horses, they always look to the horse for the problem. I know that it is never the horse's fault. I would say it is you daughters issue or others if others ride or handle the pony. All ponies tend to get bad reputations, they are bought and sold, they are owned by people that think they are a cute pet and know little about horses, then after the newness wears off, they are sold and they cycle starts over, I have never known a pony that did not have at least 3 or 4 previous owners. It is a bad cycle for a horse and they get bitter and resentful and then to start biting, kicking and rearing. This is from years of abuse and neglect by people that don't understand horses. Oats probably have nothing to do with this, lack of exercise, lack of proper handling, lack of consistent handling, rough and inexperience riders and hands are more likely the cause of these problems and it will get worse.

My opinion, which you asked for is based on my experience. Much like my opinion of your response. You want to make this about you and your daughter. This horse is screaming that he is confused, frustrated or annoyed, all of which is dangerous. A pony kick can kill as fast as an adult horse kick. A pony rear can quickly turn into a flip over or a blind run all of which can hurt or kill a child.

So you feel good that you defended your pony and your daughter. My experience with MOTHERS are that they are blinded with "motherly instinct" much like a fearful horse, they react instinctively without much forethought. Your daughter is NINE years old and you are calling her experienced. That is just ignorant and shows your lack of knowledge. I have been riding horses for almost 40 years and I still have much to learn. I can not help a horse when people such as yourself want to take any advice as criticism, make it personal and refuse to admit that they don't understand horses and don't understand how dangerous they can be.

My so called bias opinion is from years of experience of seeing ponies and horses hurt kids and then seeing parents blaming the ponies for hurting their kids, blaming trainers for not training the pony correctly, blaming the doctor, the system, and anyone else that will transfer the responsibility to anyone other than themselves.

So you go ahead and ignore my "bias opinion" and when this pony hurts your daughter, you and I will know that I tried to warn and educate you, but you knew better. If you care to read my web site, you might learn something about horses that you did not know.

Spooking and Sacking Out:

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

First thing you need to do is understand horses better. All horses are spooky. That is how they survive. So being scared is very natural. Your horse does all these things since she does not see you as her herd leader. All horses see the world as a herd, they have to try and be higher all the time, so unless you tell her you are higher she will never stop being scared with you. She has to feel safe with you and she can't until she sees you as a leader. You can't show her you are a leader until you understand how horses think and how they pick a leader.

Hey Michaela, this is a you issue and not the horse. You use terms like embarrassed, ungrateful, horrible and bad horse. Those are your terms not a horse. Your horse is only being a horse. He is nervous since he does not have a good strong leader that he can trust and feel safe with. He is nervous and scared since he knows you are not the leader so he has to be the leader and always be on guard. If you require more from him, make him listen, move his feet, stop babying him, he will see you as a leader, then he will trust you, then he will feel safe with you and will not need to worry about everything since he knows you will take care of him. He will never do this if you keep being too easy, too nice and not requiring something from him. Move his feet, make him back up, lunge him, round pen him, show him you are a higher horses and he must respect you. He needs to pay attention to you and not other things, if he ignores you, pays attention to other things, then put him to work, back him up, make him circle you, move his feet, then he will see you as leader and he will get better.

You only make him worse by trying to be too nice. You raised him and have been a friend, but he does not care or know what that means, he only knows that you and him are a herd of two and you are either higher or lower. He is treating you as a lower horse, so you need to help him see you as higher, stronger, a good leader, who will protect him, but you have to move his feet to show him this.

Read my sacking out section on my horsemanship page, this will help with his fear.

ANSWER: Well this is tough one. I agree with your husband in part. A horse is not a four wheeler. A four wheeler needs gas, an engine and tires to run. A four wheeler can be turned off with a key. A horse is a living creature that can run, stop and turn when it wants, you can't turn it off and it will kill or hurt you without ever thinking about it. Fear keeps up safe and it keeps horses alive. A horse has to live with fear every single day and it can not escape, but it keeps on doing it. A horse will give you things no one or nothing else can give you. The reward is high and so is the risk. If you that scared of a horse, then you are that scared of other things in your life. Horses make us grow, face our fears, teach us about ourselves and make us better.

Can't think of one person that has never been scared of a horse, I am always aware that a horse can hurt me if I am not careful, aware, on top of my game and fully aware of many things, but the reward if worth the risk.

So the choice if yours, you can not face this fear, take the easy way out and get out of horses. Which may the best thing for you. Or you can attack your fear, learn from it, grow and know that you the reward if worth the risk. No can make that choice for you.

The safe choice if get out. The odds of getting hurt are high, especially if you approach this like a part time hobby. Owning horses is a lifestyle not a hobby. Those that do it as a hobby make their horses pay. Horse needs time, lots of it. The first time you got behind the wheel of a car you were scared, but you did it and now don't think twice about it. I get on a horse like I get in a car. It has become second nature and almost automatic, but has taken many years.

So not sure what answer you are looking for or maybe looking for me to make this difficult choice for you, but I think you lose in many ways if you give up and let horses out of your life. The more you have to work for something the more you appreciate it. I would bet that at least 50 percent of horse people are STILL scared of horses and probably in the 75 percent area, but they still do it.

You will not meet another creature that is has fearful as a horse, they big, strong, fast, and beautiful, but they live in constant fear everyday and they have no choice.

If you read more, educate yourself more, watch videos, go to horse clinics, hang out at barns, handle lots of horses, turn horses out, hang out in pastures with horses running free, watch others handle horses, take lessons from a Horseman or Horsewoman and not just a trainer. As you discover how complex horses are you will gain confidence, the more you hand out with horses you will see that they are not mean and do not do much unless there is a reason to do it. Doing ground work on different horses will help you build confidence, no two horses are a like, they all teach you something different, so working one or two horses that you get comfortable with does not help, it actually may make it worse. Get in a group that do horse things. Horses have to fully encompass your life, you have to try and become part horse, to understand them you have think like them. Owning a horse, being able to ride a calm trained horse does not make you a horse person. The more you learn about the horse, the more you will realize how little you know about horses.

Confidence comes from doing, not watching, not reading, not someone telling you, go do, spend every free minute with horses, hand out with them, they will teach you.

There are several websites out there dealing with fear, horses, groups, questions, the information is limitless. Anyone can become good with a horse but to really understand them, that only comes with time. Time riding, time training, time watching, time feeding, time caring for them, time depending on them, time getting almost hurt by them, time healing after they hurt you, catching them in pasture, time grooming them, time picking their feet, time doctoring their injuries, time freezing bringing them hay in the rain, time walking them when they colic, time hearing them whinny when they see you, time with them knowing you are upset and the nuzzle you to make you

feel better, lots and lots of time. I can't teach these things, I can't explain horses in an email when it takes a lifetime to learn them.

All I can say is you are not the first or only person to be scared of horses. Many before you have overcome this fear and reaped the rewards of having horses in their lives. Many have gotten hurt and have gotten out of horses forever. This is a choice that each person has to make. I can't imagine my life without horses so I am bias.

You will only get out of it what you put in it

Answer: I believe no horse is past help. You want to focus on the horse as the issue, I normally focus on the people as the issue. My first guess would be the trainer is not very good, or she has not been working with the horse as much as she said. Horses get better very fast. If you have not been at each lesson and have not seen progress at each lesson then I say it is trainer and not horse. All horses are spooky and they stay spooky or get worse depending on who is handling them. His size is probably intimidating and he will know it, if someone does not push him hard.

Five months of training is crazy in my book, you should cutting cattle and doing advanced trails by now. I have an article on picking a trainer that you may want to read, it is on my articles page of my site.

The ear pinning is normal horse behavior, he is doing it since it has not been make clear that he cannot do it. I don't care if he was abused or not, he is a horse and needs to be treated like a horse, a lower horse and the people handling him need to make it clear if he threatens or pushes he gets pushed and moved fast and hard so it is clear that he does not push people.

I hear your story over and over, I can bet, with a 90% chance of being right, that this is a people problem and not a horse problem. This horse may need some tough love to teach it and not so much feeling sorry for it. Too many people think being tough on a horse is mean, it is needed and will save their life. You cannot expect the horse to change if you keep doing the same thing. Your trainer should have figured this out by now, but it sounds like she is doing the same thing since the horse is doing the same thing and not getting better.

It could be medical, it could mental, but I would bet it is people.

When I hear about horses like this, if they are close and I go work with them, the horse changes in about 10 mins and the owners can't believe it. This horse needs strong leadership, good direction, good sacking out to help him deal with his fear and not so many excuses on why he can't get better.

Read my web sit, take some notes and then ask your trainer some educated questions and see if you get reasonable answers or if you get double talk about this horse is different, this horse was abused, this horse has something wrong with him..... this is an easy way to blame the horse and not admit that you (the trainer) are doing something wrong.

Don't give up on this guy, get involved, read, learn and understand horses so you can help this horse and not depend on others to tell you what they cannot do.

that is my take,

Well anytime a horse is shaking with fear, the last thing you want to do is get on his back. Fear is normal, but shaking is a sign of a horse about to blow. As for breaking him. You can try some good sacking out. I have a section on this on my site on my horsemanship page. By increasing his fear and then removing it, you will build confidence. If his ground manners are great, then put a saddle on him while doing ground work. Get him great on ground manners while wearing a saddle. He will soon learn that the saddle is nothing that is going to hurt him.

When doing your sacking out, get him to let you learn on his back, sit on his back and lay on his back, with NO saddle. So he can learn that being on his back will not hurt him.

Then after he is good at both of those, then you add the saddle with you in it. If you go slow and prepare him good, he should be fine. At anytime he starts showing lots of fear or any shaking (you should see fear before he shakes and stop) take him back to something he is

comfortable with. So whenever he gets scared, go back to something easy that he is really good at, so he learns that he can be scared and you will take care of him.

Question: Hey Rick,

I'm hoping you can help me. I'm 44-years old, I grew up with horses because my Grandfather raised Quarter Horses for a living, so I grew up in the saddle. I can say I'm not the greatest horseman, but I've broke a few colts with very good results.

Now it is many years later, and I just acquired a 4-year-old Mustang gelding, Wiley. A friend of mine did a Mustang rescue and got a mare. A couple months later, she had a colt. Now he is mine.

My friend told me stories of him lying next to him in the pasture when he was first born.....and so the story goes. Spoiled rotten.

I just got him last Sunday, and they brought another horse along just so he could get acclimated. She is a QH mare.

The first day went well. Took a trail ride; he followed behind her. Second day, I pony-led my 12-year-old son, who has no experience, on a trail ride. I rode the mare, he rode Wiley. Nothing exceptional except bad manners, pinning of the ears, and Wiley kicked at the mare when she got behind him. (not that that was actually good!)The third day did not go so well.

I took him off by himself. I noticed a definite attitude change just leading him around. He was miffed that I would ask him to do anything, and at that point I wouldn't doubt that he may bite me. He would pin his ears back if he knew I was looking at him.I responded with my voice and a firm grasp on his head. I proceeded to saddle him up and got on. I asked him to move forward.....he would not budge. I turned his head to the left, I turned his head to the right. I kicked; he bucked. I smacked him with the reins; he bucked. I had someone lead him forward. He finally walked, but then stopped and LAID DOWN!!!!!!!!!!!!

At that point, I was dismayed and really mad. I made him get up and smacked him with the reins and very quickly made him work for me. I spent the next 2 hours on the ground leading him in circles, stopping, starting, backing up, and then I tied him up for awhile. He actually had a change of heart and was responding without attitude. I didn't get back on because there was no one around and because I wasn't sure if I really should. Wiley needs to get the fundamentals of being a domesticated horse.

Now that I know what I'm dealing with, I need to stop and and back up and figure out how to deal with him. I have never had to deal with other people's problems. If my horse had a problem, either it was me as the cause; and I knew it and could fix it, or just a matter of time with a green-broke horse. This is different.

He is kept in a pasture, and has been all of his life. The first couple of days here, he was pastured with cows. When I turned him out, he showed his aggressive nature toward them. I get that, but I have never been around a horse that treated ME as the herd.

Today, when I went out into the pasture, he ran at me. I turned around, put my hand up and said whoa! He did. But not the thing I want to happen when I walk into a field.

His previous owners tell me, "he will never hurt you", but I think he is a dangerous horse. At least he is not the kind of horse I am used to.

My 90-year-old Grandpap has strong advice on how I should deal with him. He has had success. But I think I should start with isolation. Wiley cannot be in the position bully another horse or cow or me. I have to quit being afraid and stand up to him.

What is your advice?

Answer: lol, pretty sure you are not going to like my answer, but I will give it to you. Growing up in Texas and at our age, showing a horse who is boss was accepted and normal business. This works, but it is not the best way, it is harder on horse and human and you will not get as good as horse in the end. The hard way worked back in the day since we used horses

everyday, worked them hard and spent lots of time in the saddle and working the horse. Nowadays we want this to work when a horse is a part time gig, ridden a few times a month, fed high quality feed and grain and we keep horses in stalls away from herds where they can't be with other horses and get lessons and exercise.

What you called spoiled, lots of people call imprinted or desensitized. A horse that has not been raised with hard handling does not fear/respect people as a horse that has been handled kindly and maybe cuddled too much.

You don't understand this horse since you have not learned the horse language, herd talk, herd behavior and what I think is the better way to work with horses. The old way and what your grandpa is telling you is probably to stub this horse up, isolate him, withhold food and water, sack him out and show this horse who is boss and not to mess with you. This is called breaking a horse, breaking his spirit and breaking his resistance and basically making him a well behaved slave. This worked for years and brutal methods have been around as long as horses. The new way, that most old timers don't like, don't want to accept, think is a waste of time, is what I believe is a better way.

You are looking at this horse as a beast of burden and a tool for you to use as you see fit. My way and most Natural Horsemen believe if you take more time, use understanding, work with the horse's natural instincts, you get a better horse, it is less dangerous for you and horse, and it makes you better because it.

You have treated this horse like a master and slave relationship, a Mustang is wild bred and has very strong herd instincts, he is comfortable with herd behavior, survival, does not like or trust humans, and will be quicker to fight if cornered, mistreated or man-handled. On the flip side, he will be the best horse you ever had if you talk to him in his language, gain his trust and respect, show him that you understand him and act more like a horse and herd.

So the choice is yours. You can use the old ways and fight with this horse, break him, tie him, beat him, abuse him, tear down his spirit and rip away his soul and the beauty of the horse, or you can use your head more, take more time, learn from him, become a better horseman, not use brute force and pain methods and in the end have a great horse that is your partner, who sees you as his herd leader and not a brutal human predator that he only listens too from fear.

I have lots of information on my site, tell your grandpa to read it, he will learn some things and see some things he agrees with and will see some things that he thinks is horse pucky. Older horsemen knows what worked and don't see much reason to change, especially if it takes more time. Back in the day, horses were money, work and livelihood, making it better for them was not a concern. However, with knowledge and the new age of information, better ways have been proven to be more effective, longer lasting, safer and better for man and horse. Check out my site and feel free to write back.

If you don't have time, want fast results and don't care about this horse, don't mind fighting some bucks and taking risk on you or your horse getting hurt, then don't waste your time on my site, it will not be helpful. My site is more Natural Horsemanship orientated, so it contradicts the old ways and appears not to make sense to those who believe and still practice the old ways.

For your horse's sake, I hope you read my site.

Good luck to you and your horse.

Stall Behavior:

STOP scaring your horse. She is in a new place, has been abused and neglected by race horse people and now she has another human scaring her. Treat your horse the way you would want to be treated if you were a horse. You say she has scraped herself twice, no she has not, you have scared her and made her in fear of her life so she reacted like a horse, YOU caused her to get hurt. Too bad she did not kick you when you scare her instead of running then maybe you would get the idea that scaring her is not fair.

How can you say you are afraid of her getting her and then you continue to scare her?? You

caused her to get hurt twice. You also say the gelding is aggressive over food, you are causing this too. Horses only fight over food when HUMANS are too lazy to feed them correctly. If you put food where horse have to fight to eat then they will fight, they are survival animals. If you put enough food in different locations so they do not have to fight then they do not fight.

Educate yourself about horse better so you will stop thinking like woman and stop trying to protect a horse from another horse. Horses don't need protection from horses, they need it from people.

Just to make sure I get this, you make the horse stay alone to protect it from a horse and then you scare the crap of it with a whip so it gets so scared that it hurts itself and then tell me that the horse hurt itself and you take no responsibility for the injury?? I think I get it.

If I sound irritated, rude or mean, good! I try and be the voice of the horse, if I was this horse I would tell you, don't protect me from the other horse, protect me from you. You lock me up, you keep me from my own kind, from my herd, from my safety of another horse and then you scare me and push into a panic and then blame me for hurting myself.

Here is a wild answer to your question. DON'T PUT THE HORSE IN THE STALL.

ANSWER: Sounds like he is stall sour and has become protective and aggressive from being locked up without other horses. He will only get worse. He needs a pasture with other horses to play, push, fight and get taught some manners by other horses... he is still a horse and people cannot provide all his needs, he is a herd and social animal that needs other horses. This just another sad example of people putting horses in situations where they have no choice and then when they develop bad habits due to the conditions they are kept in, people want to blame the horse or call him names like mean, aggressive, or other names. This could be caused and made worse by people correcting, teasing or treat him like his is mean, like his reputation calls him.

ANSWER: I also know it is hard to accept that you may be the cause of the problem. Unless you are spending 24 hours a day with your horse horse, there is no way you can say he is not being teased. You said he had a large turn out, your large, my large and a horse's large is very different. The fact that he is hanging out at his gate to charge people tells me that it is not that large or your horse would not be at the gate. There are several options to stop the charging but I am sure you have will reasons for not doing each of them and the horse will continue to be blamed. So here are the choices for you to tell me why you can't do any of them:

- Move the horse
- Keep people away from the gate
- Put the horse in a several acre pasture so he will not hang out at a gate
- Spend more time with your horse so he is not in his "large turn out"
- Keep your horse out of his "large turn out" more
- Keep your horse busy with a job so he will not make his job protecting his gate to his "large turn out"
- Put your horse with more horses so he will have a herd and can be a horse with a job and not a guard of his gate to his "large turn out"
- Tell the people that are so scared of this horse, the ones that tell you he charges them, to stay away from the horse if they just want to run and see him charge since they are causing and reinforcing this behavior
- Put a video camera up to record all this charging and confirm the no teasing is taking place (even though you already know this is not happening somehow)

As you can see from all my suggestions, this is about you, what you do, what you prevent and what you control, like most all horse problems it is not the horse's fault, this horse is forced to live in your world under your terms and has no choice. Of course this it never the answer anyone wants to hear since they love their horse.. I see more horses hurt, killed and mentally abused by people that love horses. A horse is happiest with other horses and in open areas, horses in pasture and in herd normally have no vices or no so called problems... why is this?? ?? the answer is simple, Less human involvement, love and help.. no stalls, no blankets, no trimmings, no shoes, no hugs... just horses allowed to be horses. So please don't tell me how grand your horse has it in his "large turn out" and then try and find an easy answer for keeping

a horse caged up and causing vices and aggressive behavior and then expect to find an easy fix by writing an email to someone.

Spend more time with your horse and keep him out of his "large turn out" is the best advice I can give.

Answer: I agree you went way too fast and did what I call set the horse up for failure. You want to make this a horse problem and I see it as a you problem. You did not spend enough time learning and establishing your leadership role with this horse before handling it in a non controlled environment. All horses are stronger and we need a cheat like a round pen or enclosed arena so the horse cannot get away and get release. You said the horse is not broke, I say you are not experienced enough to handle an untrained horse. This horse is only three so to say he is a stud or stallion, I think is giving him a tough name, he is still a baby, he is young and needs good handling. Handling that is fair and done so he can understand not done by someone who is scared, thinks he is a big bad stud or with stud chains or brute force. Not saying you are doing this, but that is normally how people want to handle so called Stallions.

The fact that you took this horse out too early and have now taught it a very bad lesson, he now thinks, and I agree, that you are not capable of controlling him, he now thinks he is stronger, he knows that he can get away from you, he now knows that you are not a strong leader and that he has to be in charge when with you, he now knows that when he wants to go somewhere you cannot stop him. You see this a he is not trained or herd bound, I see it as a horse sees it. Because you went fast, and did not take the time to do it right you have to do much longer, much harder and makes the horse pay for your going fast, taking a short cut or taking on something that you did not know you could succeed at. Now you have work much harder to unteach what you have taught. Now the horse will be less likely to trust you, to submit to you, to see you as a leader... NOT because he is not trained, not because he is herd bound, but because a person has put him in a situation where he had not choice and he did only what he knows to do, be a horse! Understanding of a horse is best gift you can give a horse. If you were to read my web site, you would know that calling a horse names like stubborn, untrained, mean, bad or other terms only tells me that the person doing the name calling does not understand horses.

Handling and controlling horses is about understanding them and communication, not about blame, fancy equipment, chains or other gimmicks.

You made the mistake, you caused what happened, you taught the horse bad lessons and now the horse learned. So you have learn how to fix it and how not to make the same mistakes.

The fact that you asked this question tells you are trying and don't understand horses. Pain, whips, scare tactics do not help horses, they make them scared and insecure and they don't like or trust the people that do it. Invest some time, read my site, understand how a horse thinks and feels, you may not have experience, but you can read and gain knowledge so you can get experience. You would not buy a car that was in middle of a highway, having never have driven before and then say, I own this car in the middle of a highway and I have never driven before, can you tell me how to get it home. So don't just start using a whip to scare a horse since you don't know anything else. Read and educate yourself so you don't make the horse pay with pain and suffering from your mistakes.

ou will like my answer, but this is not a horse problem, this is a you issue. This horse is just testing and pushing you to see how you handle it. So far the horse has TAUGHT you to feed him while saddling, to groom him, to hurt him and to NOT to be consistent. He does not know the right answer, I don't know the right answer from your description, I know what you want, but the horse does not know. He is guessing and training you. He tries different things and you try different things, so he keeps changing because you keep changing. If you want change in your horse, you have to change, but you can't change every time you are with him. You change by making this clear and consistent. You do the same thing the same way until you get the same answer. If you change the question your horse will never figure out he answer you want.

Horses don't understand punishment, the understand discipline, very big difference. They need to know what is going to happen each and every time. There can only be ONE right answer.

When you get the wrong answer you need to ask the questions again again until you get the right answer. Too many people ask ten and allow ten almost right answers, so the horse is confused and guessing each time, he never really knows the right answer. So if I ask my horse to walk off and sometime I allow him to walk one step, sometime I allow him to just back up one step, sometime I just allow him to move his head, sometime I allow him to push me, sometime he can pin his ears, sometime he can't, how in the world is going to know that walk off means walk off.

A horse is a reflection of his handling, know the horse, know the person. Scared, fearful, insecure people have the same type of horse.
Inconsistent, moody, and loud people have the same type of horse.

A horse only knows what it is taught. The first clue to this is over half of all questions I get start with, my horse just started this! If you are handling the horse and it did not do it before, then it is very obvious that you taught it, allowed it, or caused the new behavior.

Be consistent, don't bribe with food, don't beat with whips and chains, ask once, tell twice, order the third time. I could saddle this horse with none of this and if it did happen, I would addressed firmly, and forget it, and it would stop. The horse would learn very quickly that if does this I do this, he would learn very fast that one way is easy and one way is hard on him.

Read my sacking out section on my horsemanship page, this will help you gain more respect from your horse and will help you learn to read him and deal with him better.

All horses are spooky, it is how they stay alive in the wild and the spooky gene is passed on. The non-spooky gene is not passed on since those with that gene are eaten and killed. Sacking out is very important often overlooked in horse training. I have a sacking out section on my horsemanship of my site. Read it and do lots of it. You said you will never raise your voice or be forceful in anyway... this is a problem. Your horse has figured this out and not sees you as a lower horse. Any horse that will defend himself or kick or push back will be the low horse. Once your horse sees you as low horse, he will not feel safe with you, will not trust you and will not get any confidence from you. Sacking out will help you raise your horse's fear and will teach you how to read your horse before he blows that way you can calm him and help him learn to look to your for help. Also if you do not give him direction when he spooks (take the slack out of your reins) he will feel more scared and will think he has to take matters into his own hands. When you loosen the reins, you tell him that you are lost, do not know what to do and do not tell him what he should do. A horse needs direction so you don't have to correct him.

This horse is stall crazy, he needs to put out in pasture with other horses so he has a job and is pushed by higher horses and he learns herd behavior. He has been locked up so long he has developed this vice and it will cause problems later, so you have get him out. Putting him with another horse is good, but put them both in a turn out or arena and chase them with a bag, scare them so they will run and herd up, make them depend on each other so they will start watching out, put in an older mare and gelding as well, they will chase the little one and keep him busy so he will not have time to circle, you really need to attach this issue or will only get worse and the horse will suffer.

Horse abuse really pisses me off, this little guy never had a chance since the previous owners locked it up and neglected it. I hope you can help it.

I agree you went way too fast and did what I call set the horse up for failure. You want to make this a horse problem and I see it as a you problem. You did not spend enough time learning and establishing your leadership role with this horse before handling it in a non controlled environment. All horses are stronger and we need a cheat like a round pen or enclosed arena so the horse cannot get away and get release. You said the horse is not broke, I say you are not experienced enough to handle an untrained horse. This horse is only three so to say he is a stud or stallion, I think is giving him a tough name, he is still a baby, he is young and needs good handling. Handling that is fair and done so he can understand not done by someone who is scared, thinks he is a big bad stud or with stud chains or brute force. Not saying you are doing this, but that is normally how people want to handle so called Stallions.

The fact that you took this horse out too early and have now taught it a very bad lesson, he now thinks, and I agree, that you are not capable of controlling him, he now thinks he is

stronger, he knows that he can get away from you, he now knows that you are not a strong leader and that he has to be in charge when with you, he now knows that when he wants to go somewhere you cannot stop him. You see this a he is not trained or herd bound, I see it as a horse sees it. Because you went fast, and did not take the time to do it right you have to do much longer, much harder and makes the horse pay for your going fast, taking a short cut or taking on something that you did not know you could succeed at. Now you have work much harder to unteach what you have taught. Now the horse will be less likely to trust you, to submit to you, to see you as a leader... NOT because he is not trained, not because he is herd bound, but because a person has put him in a situation where he had not choice and he did only what he knows to do, be a horse! Understanding of a horse is best gift you can give a horse. If you were to read my web site, you would know that calling a horse names like stubborn, untrained, mean, bad or other terms only tells me that the person doing the name calling does not understand horses.

Handling and controlling horses is about understanding them and communication, not about blame, fancy equipment, chains or other gimmicks.

You made the mistake, you caused what happened, you taught the horse bad lessons and now the learned. So you have learn how to fix it and how not to make the same mistakes.

Since you have owned the horse for the 17 years, you have to try and figure out what is casing this. It could be something you are doing or some type of pain the horse is feeling. Something changed to cause this new behavior. Without more information, I can't really help. How much handling does the horse get, do you only feed and groom or is the horse worked or ridden, when does this happen, is it consistent, what else is happening around the horse when this happens, when does it stop, is the other horse around, is just doing this to you or others, does it stop doing this when you do something, is there always food present or involved, is there treats involved, does this happen in the same location all the time, what do you do when this happens, what do others do when this happens, how long as this been going on..... as you can tell there more questions than answers, so trying to give you an answer on this without more info is not going to be helpful.

Stallions and Studs:

Well first you say he was neglected by the last owner and you are trying to get on him way too fast. You are being a strong leader, you are not seen as the leader since the horse will telling you this by kicking and biting. Just because this horse is gelded, it does not mean that he suddenly forgets how to be a stallion. It can take months or a year for this change to take place. You need to treat him like a horse, it does not matter if he is a stud or gelding, he gets treated as a lower horse. You cannot be friends or nice to this horse until he knows you are the boss and decides not to push you or test you or move up over you.

You do this by moving his feet, changing his direction, stopping him movement and making sure he knows you move him he does not move you, he does not bite your kick at you unless he wants a whole mess of trouble. Trouble like you attacking his butt, you making him move that butt away from you to avoid getting hit with a rope, teaching him that anytime his butts gets near you, you are going to hit and get it, then he will not have time to think about kicking you. When and if he tries to bite you, you drive your elbow into his mouth like you are trying to knock out his teeth. It will only take once or twice and the biting will be done.

The only way you can help this horse is to push him like a crazy man and make him think you going to eat him if he messes with you, once that point is clear then you can slowly get nicer and kinder and start to build a relationship, but this horse has to know that you can and will get busy if he messes with you. Threats and lite hits or slaps will only tell this horse you are weak, you have to let this horse know you are the boss, you are higher, you can move his feet, you can make him uncomfortable, you can make him run and if he wants to be comfortable, he has to play by your rules. Tough love is what horses understand, it makes it clear to them and that is what they do and that is what they want. He is being clear with you, he thinks you are lower, he thinks you are weak, he thinks he can take you, he thinks he can kick you, he thinks he can bite you.....he thinks this since you have not make it clear that he can't do any of those things.

Rick

This horse is only two, I don't think he is a stud until four or five, he is acting like any two year old. He is testing to see if you are going to allow him to push you around. You have, so he thinks he is higher and now, since he is higher, he is telling you what to do, since that is what high horses do, and you are not listening. So he is threatening and trying to make you do what he wants with threats, rearing and biting, if you don't listen to him he will start biting harder, kicking and striking. He is doing normal horse behavior and treating you like he would any other lower horse. He is NOT being mean, a stud or crazy, he is just being a horse.

When a higher horse tells a lower horse to get back or move and the lower horse does not listen they get kicked or bit. Which is what you should be doing to him. You need to tell him to move and when he does not you need to discipline him, just like any higher horse would. Since you can't kick him you need to use your brain and make him think you control him feet, you can make him run, you can put enough pressure on him to make him feel uncomfortable. Once you show him that you will not allow him to treat you like a low horse, then he will stop this youngster behavior.

Read my horsemanship page on my site, it will explain horses and how they think and live. Any threats to you need to be reacted to with you pushing harder, faster and making the horse move or run, then after a few seconds, stop and act as if it never happened, don't stay mad, don't take it personal and don't try and talk it out, push him, make him move away and then go back to what you were doing.

Question: Hi Rick,

I am 23 years old. I started working with a professional trainer when I was eight. I have also worked with other professionals and love the natural horsemanship way of training. I was reading on your website and agree with you on a lot of things. I just wanted to see what your opinion is. I have a three year old BLM Mustang stud colt (he will get gelded let me explain). He is turned out with five other horses, two of which are also studs (also going to get gelded). He has a lean to, gets fed grass hay, and is on 10+ acres to run and play. I acquired him and the other two through a novice horse owner. She taught them some nasty habits. The other two I have been able to join up with, halter, and training has been wonderful. However this one in particular is displaying strange behaviors and I am not sure how to deal with him. He is a somewhat "rank" horse. He's incredibly dominant and I have to watch him like a hawk because he tries to seize every second he can to catch me off guard. We have been having a large power battle and every time he even looks at me goofy I send him off immediately. After he settles down the last time he disengaged his hindquarters when I asked, and I approached him (I still can't touch him by the way) he rolled his eyes at me and started to shake his head up and down. My first instinct was to send him off because I am so used to him threatening me. Now I am wondering if that was the correct thing to do or not. Any insight would be VERY VERY appreciated. Thank you.

Answer: It is hard to say without seeing, but head tossing and throwing can be dominate or it can be communicating come, pay attention to me, displaying pride. My Mustang does this to me some time, he still thinks he is a stud and I ignore it if it is not aggressive. He may be telling you that he is not willing to be completely submissive, which is OK, but it also means he is not seeing you as the undisputed leader. If he has not attacked you, not tried to aggressively bite you, has not aggressively backed into you kicking, then he does not think he is leader, but it will take time to get him to completely submit. If you push him away too much he will be confused and never understand the right answer and will get tired of trying to find the right answer, which will lead to frustration and then maybe resentment. So you have been reading him all the time and willing to accept small submissions. Move him but release immediately at any sign of submission and let him face you or approach. You say he is rank, I say he has learned this behavior from inconsistent handling and confusion. He just wants to feel comfortable and his body and instincts are telling him to take charge to feel safe, until someone (another horse) shows him they are in charge, they understand him, they will be fair and keep him safe, his instincts will not allow him to relax and give in to this new leader.

You have to read him, pay attention and really back off trying to push him and be weary of him since he is a STUD, a three year old is a young horse, still trying to find his place, I don't think a stud is really a stud until late threes or four or maybe five, treat this horse like a three year old and forget he is a stud and you will project, subconsciously, that you are fearful, over careful, worried, or that you think he is RANK. He is just a horse looking for fair and consistent leadership, guidance and direction, if you make the right answer clear and easy to find, he will come a long way fast.

Studs get this bad reputation for being ohhhhhh so bad, so they get treated that way and then become that way, it is a vicious cycle for the horse and it is unfair and sets them up for failure.

Be safe, be careful but treat him like a three year old mare and see if he changes, you have to change what you are doing if you want him to change. He sounds smart which is why he is not giving in, he has figured out people fast, so he will be a bigger challenge but will teach you more about a horse than anyone ever could. Learn from him and pay close attention to what he is saying or trying to say and don't be so fast to see him as "the stud".

Question: hey rick, thanks for your time. i am 34 years old. i have basically no horse experience as far as, reading and trouble shooting horse problems. i have a 7 year old quarter horse(stud). he has been at a race track/training facility since november 4th. and recently brought him home. i had no problems at the facility tacking him up to ride. and even the first couple of times here at home. he is now starting to resist his bridal. he does not want to open his mouth for the bit and once he does get the bit in his mouth, he raises his head when i try to put the headstall over his ears dropping the bit out of his mouth. what am i doing wrong and how can i correct the situation?

Answer: You said you are not experienced, this horse knows this, how? you have taught him, since you don't know how not to teach him. He is feeling more comfortable with you, he is seeing and learning that he is too safe with you and now he has to move to step two. You really need to understand horses better and you need to get this guy gelded. A horse see the world as his herd and you are either higher or lower, NO equals.. if you try and be equal he will take over. When he raises his head he is testing you and you are failing, when you fail you teach him he is smarter and he is leader, so he should not listen to you, trust you or respect you. All bad lessons, you don't realize you are teaching it since you don't enough knowledge or experience. A stud teaches hard lessons. Read my web site, every page and get this horse gelded.

I forgot to give you may standard "There is no place for Studs in today's times". Being a stud is a bad horse life, they cannot be turned out with other horses, they are always kept alone, they are not handled the same way and lots of people are scared or mean to them since they don't understand them. A horse isolated is a miserable horse. A horse needs a herd, they need friends and they need time with other horses. Studs are not allowed a lot of public events, shows or in a lot of barns. Their drive to get to a herd and mares are so strong they ignore things that can hurt them and will jump a fence, run through a fence, get torn up by a fence and literally kill themselves to escape, so people build higher fences, taller walls, tighter living spaces, keep them isolated as not to have to deal with the drive. So leaving him a stud for a while may be ok, but realize treating studs like we treat them end up making them what we think they are, mean, angry, dangerous and uncontrollable. I always advise to geld a stud, there are plenty of horses, too many that go to slaughter, we do not need more horses and a studs life is a bad life. A gelding is more mellow, more consistent and are much better in our domesticated world. Do yourself and this horse a favor, geld him and give him a herd and a good horse life. :)

At three he is a baby and still very influenced by you and his handling. So bottom line, do what you do to other horses that have worked for you. I fed my stud carrots and treats from my mouth until he was gelded and he is was and is a pocket pony and I got all kinds of advice how dangerous he was since he was a stud.....needless to say I ignored all that free advice from life long horse owners...

good luck, give him carrot for me and treat him like a young gelding, I am sure you both will do fine. :)

The kicking and pinning and herding is all normal. If you understood horses better you see this and it would not bother you. There is always a chance that horses get hurt when they play, fight or chase, but they are horses and they need to work this out. The proud cut gelding is just showing dominance. He is making sure that the new horse respects him, moves when he tells him to move and does not push or approach him unless he tells him too. All normal and needed behavior. All horses are leaders and all are followers.

Take the proud cut gelding out and put the new horse in the pasture. Let the new guy learn the fence line and area. Then put out some hay, take a two flakes out and make little piles all over, make sure they are about 20 feet apart, make about 7 to 10 piles out of the two flakes, that way the horses will be busy eating and not so busy chasing. Then let them out together

and stay away! Don't get involved, don't try and help, don't stand at the gate and watch, don't stand by the fence, let them work it out without you there trying to help and save them.

The horse knows how to run and they may chase each other and may push each other off the food, but they will work it out it YOU (AND OTHERS STAY OUT OF IT.)

The food piles will distract and with you not there the new guy will not try and run to you for help, he will pay attention, full attention to the lead gelding, once he does that, he will stop getting chased, kicked and bit. As long as you try to help, you make it worse and will end up getting a horse hurt.

Once they work out their initial meet they will settle down, but it may take a week or two for them to really get close and bond up, it is all normal. When you feed them make sure you have multiple piles of food far enough apart so they can move and push each other around, it is how they show dominance and enforce the pecking order.

ANSWER: I don't think he is reacting to smell, I think he is reacting to being locked up and only let out for 3 hrs. He is going stir crazy, if there are any older geldings in pasture, let him out and they will teach him manners. The longer you keep him locked up the worse he will get. He is scared, alone and can't rest alone, he needs a herd and other horses and he will get mean and dangerous if you keep him locked up. Under two most mares will not let him breed them and they will teach him some manners. Let him out with other horses and this problem will go away. This question and answer is a perfect example of why people get hurt by horses and why horses get a reputation of being mean and dangerous.

OMG, If you are still alive, you really need to be careful about showing a stud "who is the boss" the lesson you will learn will be hard and very costly. You are in "DANGER". Make no mistake, this horse will and can kill you whenever he wants. I cannot stress this enough. I am an experienced horseman, this horse could do the same thing to me, but I might be able to prevent it a little better than you, but I know he could do it if he wanted to or if I made him want to. You do not have any idea what you have taken on or you would not be doing what you are doing. "CHAINS AND HORSES ARE BAD". Using a chain on this horse is like shooting a charging bear with a BB gun, you are only pissing him off and sooner or later he will make you pay, severely.

My first question is why the hell are you so intent on putting him in the barn? I am with your husband on this. Is dying really worth putting this horse in the barn. I am sure you are under the belief that you are helping him, you are giving him good care, you are trying to teach him to respect you..... I think you are wrong (possibly dead wrong) if you think this. You are making him mean, you are making him not like people, you are making him associate people with pain, you are showing him that you can't handle him and you need two people and chains, you are showing him he is stronger than you, you are showing that he is in charge and that you can't control him. STOP.....

You said the horse broke out a window, NO he did not, you forced him into a place he felt trapped, scared, nervous, in pain and he panicked and reacted just like any horse would. YOU caused this, You put him in the situation where he could only fail, you tried to do the right thing and you set him up for failure, you taught him that not only do you hurt him with chains, but now if he goes where you tell him or make him that he is not safe and they he may get cut, trapped, thrown into a window, you taught him this, you put him in the place and HE had to pay for your mistakes. When this horse hurts you or kills you, your husband or the police or someone will want to kill this horse for you, to avenge you, to prevent the horse from killing someone else, to show the horse who is boss, either way this horse loses. STOP.....

You did not answer the questions I asked so I do not know what your experience is, what facilities you have, age and other things, if you read where you type your question, I have a list of things I need in order to answer your question, I only answered you this much since I think you are about to die, and that is your choice and I really don't care (sorry), but the horse you are trying to be tough with has no choice, so he pays for all your macho mistakes, so in order to try and help this horse, I ask you to please stop and leave the horse in pasture until you understand horses better, herd behavior and stud behavior better.

Give me some more background and information so I can try and help you help this horse.

PS: Make your husband read this so he may be able to put some influence on you to save you from yourself. I am sure your intentions are good, but a wild unhandled stallion does not give a damn about good intentions, he is a horse and that is all he knows how to be!!!!

Hope you are not reading this from a hospital bed,

This question was answered and since the person did not like the answer, and did not want to hear she was causing this dangerous situation, she did not provide any additional information. And if by some chance she does not get hurt she will be very lucky. A 7 year old neglected horse who has been left on his own and does not like or trust people is now being handled by a person who wants to be right and who wants to show the horse "who is boss". So now the horse is being taught that his fears and lack of trust in people are confirmed and justified. Just because a horse is gelded, this person thinks he is no longer a stud and can be bullied around with chains. Anyone who knows horses and has done their homework knows that it can take a year or more for a stallion to calm down after being gelding, especially if the stallion has been a stallion for 7 or more years. So gelding a stallion and thinking he is a gelding now is a big mistake. There are many other ways to get this horse to listen and does not involve chains, this person, like many horse people, think she knows that using stud chains gets respect and shows a horse who is boss. This person thinks she saved this horse and all she has done is move him from one abusive and neglected home to another. This horse was better off when he was left alone in a pasture, now he is being dragged around with chains, shoved in dark scary barns, caused pain and fear, and put in a no win situation. And when he is pushed too far, this so called horse person will be hurt or will get someone else hurt and then blame the horse, just like she blamed the horse in her title "Crazy horse", well I say the horse is just a horse and it has a "Crazy Owner". Too bad for the horse.

Ummm, this is interesting, since you are giving me lots of mixed signals. Normally a horse who is aggressive to food will not be instantly calm. You say he is perfect in one area and then he is showing aggressive behavior. I treat a stallion about the same way as I do other horses, with a little less trust. The hormones can cause them to be a bit unpredictable. It sounds like you have a good grasp of horses and are doing lots of things right. I would agree you don't want to fight with a stud of you might bite off more than you can chew, but this guy in only 3ish, I don't think they get real studdish until four or five, so I would treat him like a gelding, be firm, don't take BS, move his feet and show him you are higher and don't treat him different than you would any other horse. He is still a baby and now is the time to impress upon him, "don't mess with me". Now how you do this is up for discussion. If you have had success with your method, then I would saw stick with it. Don't use chains or more brutal methods just because he is a stud. I see too many studs get ruined by over aggressive and heavy handed handling since the work "stud" is used. This is a young horse, teach him like a horse, don't take more or less from him and don't worry about making him too perfect before training. I would also advise you watch and view training and handling, you don't want someone making this horse mean from treating him like a stud and then you will have to geld him and will still have a mean horse.

At three he is a baby and still very influenced by you and his handling. So bottom line, do what you do to other horses that have worked for you. I fed my stud carrots and treats from my mouth until he was gelded and he is was and is a pocket pony and I got all kinds of advice how dangerous he was since he was a stud.....needless to say I ignored all that free advice from life long horse owners...

good luck, give him carrot for me and treat him like a young gelding, I am sure you both will do fine. :)

QUESTION: I have a mare and her 5 year old stud colt, I weaned him at 7 months. I thought there is a 5 acre cow pasture between this young man and his mom, well I recently had to put him in with her for a day, I caught him nursing, you should have seen it! He had on front leg stretched out and his chest almost on the ground!! And the mare had her leg raised!!Well I stalled him for the rest of the day, and continued on to check my fencing, and found a trail from his pasture straight across to the mare's pasture the area was covered in hoof prints. I am no detective ,but it appears this guy has been getting out and nursing and going back. This is hard for me to get my mind wrapped around ,surely I would have caught him in the last 4 plus years?

The mare's tits look ok and her bag is much smaller than a full bag would be,but she does

have milk that drip.

I put this guy back into his pasture, after some re-enforcement and to my surprise he is a jumper??? an unbelievable beauty, the fence is near 5' feet and he cleared it like it was a stick on the ground. He is lock up right now having a fit.I know I am going to have problems and I am in it for the long haul , this guy is my pet and is an easy ride,easy catch,easy to trim,you can crawl underneath him sit under him, just an all out gentleman. for a 5 year old, I am told he is one of the best.He has not been cut, and never covered a mare. How would you suggest I go about this weaning? In a manner that will not upset the apple cart and damage his behavior? My life is chaos right now. all night he has bawled and so has the mare.Please I need help. I feel so bad.

ANSWER: Why do you care? Let him go, when she wants him to stop she will let him know. If she gets pregnant she will stop him, I would be more worried about him getter he pregnant??? ???

So what if he gets a little milk, what does it hurt? I never get this weaning thing that people seem to have????

Gee, I wonder what happens in the wild and why do not see these "problems"....

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: I care because I don't want to hurt the health of my mare or the colt. 5 years of nursing surely can't be good for her or him.. That is why I was asking you.. Are their mares who nurse for 5 years straight ,in the wild?? I would think the would breed back at foal heat.

ANSWER: How will it hurt your mare or your horse. FYI, A horse is not a colt after five, at five a colt becomes a horse. But back to your questions, I am a big believer that horses always do better when we stay out of it. My horse nursed until three, the only reason he stopped was I moved him to a different location from mom. Unless you or a vet can tell me how this hurts them, I would say stay out of it and let them be horses. Not sure it this would happen in wild since lots of other factors in wild. No geldings in wild, only one stallion in herd, colts are pushed out and mares are bred, no humans, all these factors change what happens in wild.

I still think him being a stallion is a much bigger problem, why not geld him, he will breed her and the baby will have problems and may not live, why do you need a stallion, in this day and age, no place for stallions in domesticated horses. I would geld him and that may fix this and I would ignore the milk snacks and let them hang out together and be horses. Keeping horses alone and separated are much bigger issues and will make both horses more nervous and harder to handle and will get them in trouble.

My take is geld him and let them be together and stop trying to protect them from some perceived danger, that I can't see and you have not given me any reason or evidence why this is an issue other than you wanting to protect, mother or get involved in horses being horses.

QUESTION: Hi,

About two months ago, I purchased my first horse, a Thoroughbred from someone who got him off the track. I am not a new rider, I ridden most of my life and all sorts of hard to ride horses. Because this is my own, I guess I'm at a lost.

From what I understand, he was gelded late and still has the built like a stallion. He is hard to keep in the paddock because we can't have him near any mares, he breaks down the fence to get to the mares. He has been fighting with the other geldings in his paddock (nasty fights too...the other geldings have incredible deep bite marks after he's done with them) even though he's the new kid on the block. Otherwise, I don't have much problems handling him.

Under saddle, for the first month and a half, he has been a dream. If I keep him working he doesn't pay much attention to the mares. And he has been getting his lead changes. Recently, we decided to work more on the lead changes and getting them smoother. Since that, he has decided not to switch from right to left all the time and if he does, just the front, not the hind. Sometimes if you ask him, he will take the bit and take off. He has already taken the bit and race away with me and I have been unable to stop him, throwing out my back and tearing a ligment in my arm. My coach got on him one day and asked and he put up a dirty fight

including ramming her into the wall. While she got the change several times after that, it was a nasty fight to get it.

Lately I find him aggressive under saddle. He used to be ridden in a snaffle but now I can't trust him to ride with that. I am not afraid of him and will get on but I don't wish to fight with him. I have dealt with a lot of difficult horses but never a dirty fighter. As far as the vet can tell, no health issues. We are doing blood work to check his testosterone levels but that would have no bearing on his attitude right now would it?

Any help on what I can do to get him to stop taking off and stop fighting dirty would be nice. I would like to get back to the lead changes again.

ANSWER: You are not going to like my answer. You have had the horse for two months, are worried about lead changes, have others "fighting" with him, you think this is a horse problem, you have made several excuses like the bit is not strong enough, the horse acts like a stallion, proud cut, the horse fights with other horses, he has run off on you, the horse hurt your back, the horse is fighting dirty and now you say "HE" is aggressive in the saddle. Geez, I wonder why this could be happening now and it was not happening before???? I wonder why all these problems were not there for the first month (before you) and they have just suddenly developed???? I wonder who could be causing this horse to do all these things?

I would hope you open your eyes and see that YOU are the problem, you caused these issues, you created these problems and blaming the horse, the bit, the testosterone, calling this horse names like "a dirty fighter" will not help you, the horse and will not win you any points in my book.

This horse is just a horse and that is all he knows how to be. Your excuses are only prolonging the issues and preventing you from changing. A horse is only a reflection of the rider. If you are good the horse is good, if the horse is bad then you are bad. You talk like you have ridden all kind of horses and not had these problems. That tells me that you were never with a horse long enough for the horse to figure you out, now you have one that you spend more time with and it has figured you out. I don't know you, but this horse is telling you and me that you don't know what you are doing. Your name calling and excuses about bits and proud cut tell me you don't understand horses. You are trying to force things without understanding. You do not have a partnership with this horse, you have a master and slave relationship.....and the horse is going to teach you that respect works both ways.

Anyone that has read my site or articles would know that asking me a questions, blaming and bashing the horse, is going to get you what you give the horse. You may not like this answer, you may think I am mean, insensitive, a jerk and that I don't understand you or that I am not helping you and just blaming you.....welcome to the world of your horse...

Stop trying to train and change this horse and try and get to know him, develop a relationship with him, learn his language and understand him.... if you do that you will be amazed how fast your so called "horse problems" will go away.

I address all of your issues on my site, if you want to take the time to read it and try and understand horses better.

Training New Horse:

Well, this like most horse problems is a people problem. Don't worry about what she went through before you, only worry about what you are doing. When I read she throws her head in a bit, my first thought was get rid of the bit. Which you did, good job. Now you have to learn more about horses. You say the horse fights you on a ride, a horse cannot fight alone, she fights because you fight. A fight involved two, one cannot do it alone. So you need to stop fighting with her. You said you let her run and she did not calm down, of course not, when you run a horse it sends them into flight mode and their body dumps endorphins into to them so they can run fast and not get eaten. Running a horse never calms a horse and anyone that says it does, does not know horses.

Every horse is different and every horse teaches you, this horse is teaching you to improve your horsemanship. You need to work on your self and you need to improve and your horse

will improve. I am not riding with you so I can only guess, but when you say fight I can picture you as pulling on the reins, always holding her back, and using the reins for security since you think if you let go she will run off.

I would suggest you ride this horse with a halter and lead rope in a round pen or small area. Learn to use one rein to control her and gain trust and confidence. As you do this you will learn that you don't need to pull on two reins to control her and you will have to develop softer hands. Soft hands make soft horses. If you ride her with one rein you will gain confidence in yourself and the horse will know this and will respond to you better and you both will grow and have better rides.

This horse is 5 so he is fully grown and I agree he probably has baggage you are not aware of. However, the slow way is the fast way. Make sure your training sessions are no longer than 20 or 30 mins. It is better to train 3 times a day for 20 mins than try and 2 hours in one setting. Horses learn from release, too many people try and start new horses and then want to go and go and keep going just because it is going good, Stopping is so importing, too many times people don't know when to stop, keep going until the horse gets fed up and then blows and then they stop, bad timing and bad training.

Getting off with the tail swish and belly kick is not good, you don't the horse to learn that by doing this you get off, then he will do it more and worse. Ignore his attempts to scare you or push you, push back so he forgets what he did and then stop after you get him to do something you ask for and something he is good at and something that you know he knows well, that way you set him up for success. It is easy to make a horse fail, that is the old rough guy training, Natural horsemen set the horse up to pass and do succeed, you do this by making things clear, showing the horse there is only ONE right answer and then giving release the sec he tries the right answer.

Do lots of sacking, read my horsemanship page, it is long but you will understand horses better after you read it.

Q: I am in Australia and would be happy for you to post my question on your site with your nice kind answer!

I have just been offered an ex-racehorse which I'm thinking of taking on as he is a nice big horse (I am tall) and strong, intelligent and hasn't been messed around as far as handling goes - he is easy to touch over his head, bridle, saddle, handle etc.

Doc is nearly 9, He has been racing most of his life until recently so this could be a handful, and not sure if I am taking on too much of a challenge, but I am very open to working the "right" way with him to have him be the gentle and happy hack that I'm hoping for!

I read your piece on bosal vs snaffle and would love to give this a go if this is the best way to communicate without pain. I do want to eventually do dressage comps if I choose to so not sure if they allow hackamores but great if they do!

So far I first got on him to see how he felt and he went nicely at a walk in a snaffle bit and felt quite soft and I have soft hands. We then did a little bit of trotting and all went well. He seemed to round up but does not really have the concept of straight lines yet being a racehorse only knowing a white fence on one side at 60km an hour!

The next time I got on him was a dumb move as I should really be doing lots of ground training first) he was lovely at the walk and understandably still not responding to left or right very well (rein held out in the direction and other on the neck, eyes in the direction, legs gently aiding - but when I asked him to trot he lost the plot and took off like a racehorse would and so I decided in order to preserve my life, that I better just do some ground training now and not be so silly as to think I can get on a racehorse and do what all the other horses I've been riding do. Today I put a halter on and a lunge rein and am starting to get him used to going around me in circles at a good walk, stopping to my voice, calmly turning the other way. Standing him still and turning his neck towards me while pushing him away from the gut area. He is so happy to respond and likes being told what to do - always looking for his boundaries and the next instruction. He did take off when a stable mate ran past, but I don't have the luxury of a coral to hold him in right now. So went and got him and started again. I just don't want him to be taking off and thinking this is the best way to gain "release".

My issue is I don't have a lot of ground training experience in re-training horses. Apart from working with a very quiet warmblood for the last 2 years who is so quiet I got on him after 6 months of ground training and have been quietly and happily riding him since. I'm not sure whether to apply the same training to an ex-racehorse? What would you suggest in terms of starting him in a bosal and which is the best type? Can I use bosal and dressage saddle?! If you have a section on re-training ex-racehorses I would love to see it so you don't have to type too much - any suggested readings or DVD's I'd love to see too. Do you want to see a photo -

Thanks for your time Rick

A: You ask for a nice kind answer like I would give anything else..... :) You came to the wrong guy for that. I happen to think I give good advice to help the horse, if a human gets better because of it, so be it, but my goal is too to help the horse. So if people just listen and try and understand the horse and not concentrate on ME or how I said something or how I was not nice or how I was a hardass, they would see my advice as the way a horse see's them, confused and frustrated with the human lack of understanding of the horse.

So enough jigger jabber about us foolish humans. This horse is just a horse, it does not matter if it is abused, a ex racehorse, an Olympic winner or a wild mustang (brumby), all horses are the same in their behavior, instincts and communication. When I work with a horse I treat it like a horse and depending on how he responds or reacts then I adjust what I do, but I always treat him like a horse in horse language.

Basically pressure and release, I am higher and I do not move away, I control their feet, change their direction, make them back up, make them stop and make them move, all of this tells them I am the higher horse, I am the lead horse, I can push them and they cannot push me, I can put pressure and I can remove pressure, I can keep pressure on and they cannot get release until they give me the right answer or ask me for release. Your mistake: So when you ask for a trot and the horse runs off on his own, he tells you and you tell him, you cannot control him, you cannot stop him and you are not the high horse and he should not listen to you. So when you lunge a horse and he gets away, you tell him you cannot control him, you can't stop him, you are a weak leader, he can get release himself, he is smarter and you are not a good leader and he should not listen or trust you.

So every time you TRY and fail, you teach the horse bad lessons, you make the horse smarter and you lose your position, this makes all future training harder on the horse, since it is their nature to test their leaders and try and move up higher and they have to test their leader all the time to ensure only the strongest and smartest is in charge. Every time they test and you correct correctly, give good direction and prevent them from pushing you, getting away, or something else, you move up and maintain your high position and all training will be easier.

So when I say set a horse up to succeed that means you don't fail or the horse fails. When you mess up the horse pays, when you do not plan and the horse wins, you fail and the horse pays. If you go slow and take the time it takes, it will take less time. Short cuts don't work and they cheat the horse and you and fail most of the time.

You got in a hurry and tried to do too much too fast, you set the horse to fail by TRYING and guessing what would happen or guessed that it MIGHT work out, so you wanted to see what would happen if you tried to trot, the horse was not ready, you were not ready, the horse ran off, he lost confidence in you, he knows you are not a good leader, he does not trust you now and is less likely to do what you tell him. You set him up to fail and he did, now he has to pay. You have to get tougher, you have regain that position you loss and you have to push harder, he will push harder back since you have proven that he cannot trust you to be in control, he will try and take control since he thinks he has too, since you told him and showed him that you are not a strong leader. This cycle causes confusion and tears down trust and respect all because of you. You did not plan, you did not start small and ensure success, you did not prepare the horse properly so it knew what you wanted, so it knew how to give you the right answer, you did not know the horse, you did not spend enough time with horse, you did not ensure you position as leader or high horse and now the horse has to pay.

When I say pay, I mean you have to be tougher, harder and more strict, you undo what YOU did and the have to push the horse harder so he will not want to test you, so he will start to

think you are a good leader, so he can trust you and he does not have to test you since you show him, you are in charge, you will keep him safe, you will give him good direction so he knows the right answer and can find the right answer easy.

So, you made some mistakes that did not have to be made. If you learn from them and grow - good, if you blame the horse or look for excuses or try and make this a horse or racehorse issue, then you will continue to make the horse pay for your lack of understanding of the horse.

This horse needs what every horse needs, a good strong, fair leader that understand how to be a horse and what it is to be a horse, then trust and a relationship will grow.

Read my site from start to finish, just a little each day, read it as if a horse is saying what I say, go the links and articles and read and study the way of the horse, the more you think like a horse and understand them, the easier it will be for you and the horse.

Rick

Question: Hello, I am 24 years old. I have the horse who is 12 years old, gelding. He lives in a pasture with other horses. In the herd there are about 25 horses. The first in the hierarchy - the leader is one mare, and my horse is the second one. So usually he behave with other horses quite angry, usually shows his leadership. I take him to the stables just once per week in order to brush him, ride and to spend my leisure time with him just being around him. Usually with me he is very friendly and curious in the stable. The problem is that I don't like his behavior then I ask him to go forward. And it's not important if I am on the ground or in the saddle, he starts to go forward hard. Then I am on the ground and I ask him to go forward, or follow me I have to pull him with the rope and tell him with word "common, common", or touch his side in order to move him. And then I am on the saddle it is the same, I have to force him to go forward. I would like to know how can I do something to make him go forward more quickly without forcing him too much. I don't understand why he doesn't want to listen to me then going forward? Because then I am on the ground I can ask him by the word or with my hand to go backward and he does it. Also I can ask him to move right or left, I can ask him to raise his hoof and he responds me quit quickly with a wish to do it. And in the saddle after with effort to go forward I can trot, counter, walk again, stand still. So the problem is starting to go forward.

I hope to get your answer.

Best wishes from Lithuania!

Answer: If he does all these others things good, then this may be a confusion issue. When I say confusion, it is on different levels for this horse. He is used to being high horse and only answers to one higher horse 90 percent of the time. So when you come around once a week and expect him to listen and respect you (in his mind you push him around and make him work), so he thinks why should I let this person that I only see once a week come out here and push me around. Remember he gets to push around 23 other horses everyday and every hour he wants, you have to make it clear and show him that it is to his benefit to listen you or he gets to work more.

IF you are asking a horse two and three times to do something then you have taught him that he does not have to listen on the first ask. The reason he moves back and side ways is you are pushing him in those directions, you need to push him forward. lunge him and make sure you are behind the driveline. (I discuss this on my horsemanship page of my site) You said you are pulling and saying come on, you can't pull a horse, you are only teaching him that he is stronger than you, not a good lesson, you need to move his feet, if he does not walk when you say walk, you need to turn up the pressure, make him move backwards, make him run backwards, make him change directions, make him move his feet, this will tell him you are the boss, you are in control, you can move him feet, and he will figure out, if you do it right, the horse will know it.

Question: Hi, I am a 51 year old woman who grew up with horses; always loved to ride... been away from it far too long..finally re-entering the world of horses..Got a 2 year old gelding 1 year ago... He's 3 now. Much, much trail riding, expose him to noises,barking dogs that run out and chase,always try to manage him through his fears and being nervous... but I can't seem to get him to get better about the cars or trucks that we always encounter while riding the roads... they slow down, even stop when they see him acting up. I steady myself and hold

him in and talk him through each situation ..Say " EASY" repeat it Can you help me come up with a better technique?

Answer: Since I believe that most horse problems are caused by people, I normally go there first. You say you hold him in when he acts up, I would think that holding him is making him act up. You think he will react, you think it, feel it and try to prevent it and then it causes it. A lot of people who get back into horses later in life, have a lot more fear of getting hurt, they are a lot more careful and fearful, the horse knows this. Riders that are scared tend to hold on the reins tight and are always trying to hold a horse back. This creates frustration and confusion in the horse. The is looking for release and the right answer, since he can't figure out the right answer and feels all this pressure all the time, he continues to look for the right answer, so he get more anxious and nervous, he feels less secure and it tears down the relationship with the horse.

You say you try and manage through his fears and nervousness, I think you are trying to manage your fears and nervousness. A horse is a reflection of the person handling him, a confident person normally has a confident horse, a nervous person has a nervous horse, a scared person has a scared horse. Work on yourself and your horse will get better. Stop trying to make this a horse problem and stop trying to save the horse, help the horse, protect, manage the horse or hold him in.

Do more sacking out, I discuss this in detail on my horsemanship page of my site. This will help you read him better, and help him deal with any fear.

Question: Hello, I am 24 years old. I have the horse who is 12 years old, gelding. He lives in a pasture with other horses. In the herd there are about 25 horses. The first in the hierarchy - the leader is one mare, and my horse is the second one. So usually he behave with other horses quite angry, usually shows his leadership. I take him to the stables just once per week in order to brush him, ride and to spend my leisure time with him just being around him. Usually with me he is very friendly and curious in the stable. The problem is that I don't like his behavior then I ask him to go forward. And it's not important if I am on the ground or in the saddle, he starts to go forward hard. Then I am on the ground and I ask him to go forward, or follow me I have to pull him with the rope and tell him with word "common, common", or touch his side in order to move him. And then I am on the saddle it is the same, I have to force him to go forward. I would like to know how can I do something to make him go forward more quickly without forcing him too much. I don't understand why he doesn't want to listen to me then going forward? Because then I am on the ground I can ask him by the word or with my hand to go backward and he does it. Also I can ask him to move right or left, I can ask him to raise his hoof and he responds me quit quickly with a wish to do it. And in the saddle after with effort to go forward I can trot, counter, walk again, stand still. So the problem is starting to go forward.

I hope to get your answer.
Best wishes from Lithuania!

Answer: If he does all these others things good, then this may be a confusion issue. When I say confusion, it is on different levels for this horse. He is used to being high horse and only answers to one higher horse 90 percent of the time. So when you come around once a week and expect him to listen and respect you (in his mind you push him around and make him work), so he thinks why should I let this person that I only see once a week come out here and push me around. Remember he gets to push around 23 other horses everyday and every hour he wants, you have to make it clear and show him that it is to his benefit to listen you or he gets to work more.

IF you are asking a horse two and three times to do something then you have taught him that he does not have to listen on the first ask. The reason he moves back and side ways is you are pushing him in those directions, you need to push him forward. lunge him and make sure you are behind the driveline. (I discuss this on my horsemanship page of my site) You said you are pulling and saying come on, you can't pull a horse, you are only teaching him that he is stronger than you, not a good lesson, you need to move his feet, if he does not walk when you say walk, you need to turn up the pressure, make him move backwards, make him run backwards, make him change directions, make him move his feet, this will tell him you are the boss, you are in control, you can move him feet, and he will figure out, if you do it right, that walk forward when you tell him is EASIER then having to run backwards and work hard.

Question: I adopted a prison trained mustang last August. I would like to teach him to work in a harness, dragging large logs, pulling a cart, ect. At the auction, I saw the trainer using the horse to drag a small log on a rope. When I tried something similar he shot off like a bat all over the pasture like a dork. When he finally calmed down, I lead him into the round pen and slowly re-introduced him to the concept, maybe I should have done this first? The horse seemed to be uncomfortable with dragging anything at all, just a rope. Maybe it's just an excuse, to see what he might possibly get away with. Another issue we have while working in the arena, he tries to reject pole work. Any suggestions?

A: If you get the wrong answer, YOU asked the question wrong. Not to be rude, but would think dork would more likely apply to a person that scared the crap out of their horse without properly preparing them for success. You are lucky he just ran, had he really got scared he may run through a fence, tried to jump a fence and killed or hurt himself badly. Like always, horses always have to pay for peoples mistakes. As you rightly pointed out, you should have done the round pen and slowly introduced it to the horse. Lets look at this like a person who knows nothing about horses. If I saw a horse do something good with one person and then another person tried the same thing and it was a mess €..if the horse is the same horse, the only thing that changed was the person € most would see this as the person did something wrong and caused the mess and conversely the other person caused the good outcome. For some reason horse people never see things this way. A horse is reflection of the person handling it, it turns out good, the person did the right things, if it turns out bad, the person did the wrong things. Hence the saying: Most horse problems are really people problems. Your question put most fault on the horse, you use words like €œhe rejects pole work €, that is what you say. I say you have not present pole work properly, you have not helped him accept pole work, you are teaching resistance and the horse is learning. You say the horse shot off like a dork, I say you scared the carp out of him, did not think like a horse and set the horse up for failure. I know you did not intend to do this, but results is all that matter, intentions are just something discussed later to make people feel better, horses have no concept of our intentions. Another way to look at this is, before you got involved and put the rope on the horse was he running around like a dork? No. So the sooner people look at all actions from a horse is a result of what they do, then they can begin to change what they do so the horse will change. Too often, people do the same thing and expect different results from a horse. Cut this horse some slack, he has been captured, ripped from his herd, trained by a stranger and caged, then moved again, now is with a new owner, new environment and is getting scared to death by his new owner trying to do too much, too fast and without proper preparation. If you can admit, which I think you got by your questions, that this horse did nothing wrong and is not a bad horse and that every action the horse did was caused by you, then you learn from this, not repeat it and not set this poor €œdorky € horse up for another bad lesson. Since you had the knowledge to bring him to the round pen, you know what you should have done, just do it in the future. The slow way is the fast way with horses.

Well every time I hear "Amish" I cringe. These people are in the dark ages, literally. They still use crude and cruel methods to train horses. First of all the picture appears that the draft horse is very under weight. She looks at least 3 or 400 pounds under weight from the picture so make sure she is getting lots of good hay whenever she wants. You have look at this horse as if it has been abused and neglected. You have to teach this horse that it can trust people and not see people as just a mean thing that hurts him. I would stop riding him for a while, put some weight on him, bond with him and just spend time grooming him, doing light and easy ground work. Get him to see you as his leader and as his partner and friend. I would not believe anything you were told about this horse. Maybe it is just the picture, but the horse does not look comfortable with your child standing next to him. The horse looks very dull and almost unemotional.

Hard to tell from one still pic so I could be way off, but you are there, be careful you have no idea what this horse has experienced so prove everything to yourself. As for hiring a trainer, don't send your horse to a trainer, you get training, you watch every lesson or training session, that way you see how the horse responds, how he reacts to fear, what to do and not to do. Never send a horse to training, get yourself trained and then you can train and apply things to your horse.

Read my site so you will have a better understanding of horses, how they think and live. It will help you with your relationship with this horse.

Lots of time a baby will pick up the behavior of the mom. So the baby may warm up after it sees mom getting attention. The first thing I tell people to do when they say I can't catch my

horse, is, Stop trying to catch them. A horse knows, you have to stop trying so they will stop trying to run and prevent you from catching them. So don't try and catch her, ignore her, let her get curious, let her wonder why you are not going after her, she will come to you to investigate and check you out, if you don't get all huggy and grabby and try and reach out to pet her or put pressure on her, she will rub on you and nuzzle you, but if you are trying to touch her (putting pressure) then she will keep trying to move away and avoid it. Carrots are good teachers, once you get her to eat a few and like them then you can use them to get her to want to come to you and want to get more.

I have to disagree with never buy a horse out of sympathy, it depends what you are buying for. If you understand a horse you can help a horse greatly by being a strong and fair leader so he will not be dangerous and you can make him a better and safer horse. Abused or neglected horses need homes that understand them and can help them. The problem is some people think they are helping them by being nice and feeding them, that is just as bad as being mean to them. The best gift you can give to a horse is knowledge about the horse. Glad you checked out my page, my way is not the only way, but it seems to work for me and many others.

Try not to look at this horse as a mistake, look at him as a learning experience, he is going to teach you more about a horse than your other horse every could. He is going to make you become a better horseperson and he is teach you more about horses than any person ever could. So embrace this as you are a student of this the horse and this horse is doing you a favor by teaching you. At the end you will look back and see that you are better because of this horse, you will know more and you will appreciate the final result more. :)

Be safe and happy trails,

QUESTION: I am 63 years old. I have always loved horses. I have a 8 year old haflinger that I have had for 6 years. He was trained to drive and my daughter and I drive him around the farm occasionally. My daughter wants to have her wedding on the farm and drive in the pony cart, in May of 2010. I think the excitement of that setting would set him off, but I don't want to disappoint. When I say we drive him occasionally it is because I don't fully trust him. One telling thing he does is that when he is loose and you let him through a pasture gate he will aim a kick in my direction. He can be rude.

ANSWER: Well I would rather disappoint your daughter then get her hurt or killed on her wedding day. If you try and rush this horse or make it do something it is not ready for and you are not ready for you setting the horse and everyone else up for failure. If it is that important get someone who does this for a living and has had lots of previous success with this. A wedding is a very high sensory type environment. I would compare it to a parade, riot, concert or other loud situation. This puts a lot of pressure on the horse, the horse needs preparation, good past experiences, good confidence in it's leader and needs to be introduced in small steps to insure success.

This is not the case, you don't have the time the horse needs and this is a disaster looking for a place to happen.

With that said, I get very protective of horses that are called names. I know that horses are only reflections of their handling so when someone calls a horse a name they are describing them self. From this horses perspective, he thinks you are rude. You don't work with him everyday, you ignore him most of the time, you trained him to drive and then did not continue it, so he may feel abandoned, you said you trust him, why should he trust you, a horse will not accept a leader that does not trust them. He kicks when you let him out since YOU allow it, YOU do not prevent it, YOU do not teach him that it is unacceptable, YOU have spent the time to correct it, YOU have not given him good enough direction so he knows not to do it, YOU are not confident when you handle him, YOU..... :) get the message, all horse problems are people problems, if you improve yourself, your horse gets better, if you blame the horse and call him names, you keep doing the same thing, so your horse keeps doing the same thing..... if you want change from your horse YOU have change first.

I bet you a plane ticket and expenses that I can turn this horse out and he will kick at me. :) When I show people this, they still don't want to admit they are problem. When a acts differently when I handle them, people will say, I have a gift, the horse likes me, I have a special bla bla bla, NO, it is none of that, I understand horses, I know how to talk to horses, I communicate with horses, I give them good direction and they respond. But if people admit

this... that would mean they are the problem.... most horse owner in the world will tell you if a horse is bad, it is the horse's fault???

I believe it is never the horse's fault.

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: You are right. I would like to find this horse a new home but don't want to endanger anyone else. Do you have any suggestions for me,for the sake of this horse's future? Valerie

ANSWER: This horse is not mean, so don't call it that when you try and sell it. It needs time and attention, it needs good consistent handling and it will only test other people if they let it, if they correct it he will learn how to be nice. I would look around and see if someone has a lone horse and if someone is looking for a pasture mate for their horse. Another horse, especially an older mare will teach this horse some manners and respect lessons.

So I would approach it as this horse needs a owner that is willing to send lot so time and has some experience with horses or as this horse needs a nice pasture and herd to hang out with so it can be a horse. :)

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: ok,thank you for the answer. My options now are to donate the horse to a charity that does work with teenagers or to take him to a haflinger auction. Just for information how do I keep him from exploding and kicking in my direction today like he did yesterday?

Answer: If he respects you he will not kick at you, you can pull his head to his butt which makes his butt go away from you, as long as he head faces you, who cares if he kicks, but this is not a kicking issue, it is a respect issue. He thinks you are lower so he kicks at you, once you show him you can make him back up, you can take his head away, you can disengage his hips, you can make him uncomfortable and put pressure on him, then he will start thinking you are higher and he will not kick.

You have to approach this from a horse's view and the way horses think and live, not from a owner or human view.

QUESTION: I have got a 3 yr old new forest filly no one wanted her she is untouched i have put her in a big stable she is comming to me but i am leaving her needy she lets me touch her face when she's eating, i'm not crowding her she's following me and i'm not invading her space. she's only been in for one week and really come on i just want to check whether i'm doing right building her trust i've put headcollar in feed and she's played with it i've hung it up so she's not scared i have raised foster foals but i had the trust from day one i just want to check if i'm doing right and get your advice as you know horse world is full of experts some telling me to tie her up and rope her down to get head collar, i feel every horse is different and i know it's about pressure i just would like your advice please, i'm 38 i was brought up with pit ponies from 3 yrs , worked as stable girl on race yard for 3 yrs in ireland, hunted and raised foster foals, now happy to hack round until she come along, she's a lovely filly just want to do right by her thanks

ANSWER: It sounds like you are doing ok. I would just be aware that you have see things as the horse sees them. Horse only respect higher horses, so you make sure the horse does not see you as weak when you say you are no invading her space, she may see this as she is pushing you away and not letting you into her space, big difference. Time is the best thing with a horse, but if that time is teaching the horse that it is higher,it is in charge, it is stronger, or smarter than you will be working against yourself. It does not matter what we think we are doing, what matters is what does the horse think... this is key. A has to know it can trust you, but it also has to know that you are higher, you are in charge, you can move them, you are the higher horse. Too many people try and be too nice and kind and never push or challenge a horse and then the horse takes advantage, starts getting pushy, kicks, bites and other behavior, that is normal for horses, and that is what they do to lower horses. Then people want to say their horse is mean or aggressive. When in fact, they caused this behavior by not understanding horses and not being a higher horse.

Question: I am 27 years old and am an intermediate rider. I have a 9 and 7 year old Tennessee Walking Horse. When I got them they were very calm and would ride very well. I have had their shoes taken off and now have a natural horse practioner that trims their hooves every three weeks if needed. The horses are kept out 98% of the time and they are not with any horses. They are only in the stalls during bad weather. The horses diet has not changed and they are being ridden often. However, my problem now is that both horses want to run the entire time you are on them. They will not stop and will not slow down no matter what bit is used. Yesterday we rode a seven hour ride on open trails and they ran the entire time. You could not hold the horses back. They did not break a sweat or anything. I do not mind going fast, but only if I want them too. I also cannot stop them. I really have no clue what to do.

Answer: First you need to realize that bits do not stop or control horses, they cause pain and fear and make the horse nervous. Most all problems are people caused. If you cannot stop or control a horse you have no business taking them out in open trails, you are a danger to yourself, others and the horse. Put this horse in an enclosed area, an arena or round pen, smaller the better. A horse will get bored before it gets tired. Teach this horse to stop, walk, trot and canter on command while you are on the ground, this will ensure that the horse knows. Then try and repeat this when in the saddle in the same small area, this will be familiar so you will be setting up the horse for success and not to fail (like you are doing now/failing)

If you take the time it takes, it takes less time. The slow way is the fast way for horses. Read my website so you can understand horses better.

Question: hi i have a nearly 5yr old welsh pony gelding.he used to get along with other horses or pony but now we cant put him in with any other ponies(mares or gelding) or horses that are geldings.he only gets along with mare horses.anytime a horse or pony comes near him he will turn round and go to buck or kick him.we have tried to put him with our welsh pony mare whos smaller but he just fights with her too it makes it difficult as we agist so i now have had to more him to a place where he is alone.he was fine before what could have changed his attitude.he went on a 4week training with someone to educate him more and since then hes not the same.do you think it could have possibly been from a horse who may have kicked him and no he wants to get them first any others before they get him.he is in a paddock with just grass thats long and dry where i agist.please help he is a loving pony

Answer: All horses fight,buck and kick, this is normal horse behavior. All horse appear not to get a long at first, but this is normal. People tend to try and protect them and help them and keep moving them out to save them. Put him in with the horses and let them work it out, as long as the other horses have a place to run they will learn who is boss, who is leader and who is in charge.

Bad horses are not born, they are made..... This pony is just trying to prove himself as a strong leader and demanding respect from the other horses.

As soon as the other horses submit to him the fighting will stop, most people pull a horse out and separate them before this can be worked out, so it continues and the people make it worse. Let the horses be horses, work out their issues without human interference and the fighting will stop in a week or so.

Normally food makes horses fight, so make sure and feed in many piles so all horses have a place to go if they get pushed off their food, that way fights will be less.

Trailer Loading:

The horse is confused and scared. You need to set him up for success and slow down and make this easy steps. Don't load him all the way. Load his front feet and have him back out a few times, then if he is calm and has got the idea, load his front feet and one back leg only and then back him out. Then after a few times of that, then load all for legs (Not all the way in) and back him out. This horse needs to learn to back out blindly which is hard and scary. You have really done this horse a disservice by setting him up for failure by letting him hit his head. Now you have to undo what you have done and it will take three times as long. You never bring a horse into a place without teaching him how and that he can get out safely. You have taught this horse that when he loads for you and trust you, he gets his head hit so now he thinks you are setting him up and does not trust you. For good reason.

You say this horse if strong willed, I say you are not a strong leader for this horse so he feels he has to be strong willed to stay safe. It is never the horses fault.

All horses are leaders and all are followers, all horse kick and all horses get kicked, all horses bite and all get bitten, it what horses do. So if a horse feels he needs to be a leader to stay safe, he will and then people will blame the horse for being stubborn.

You made many errors and your horse had to pay for your mistakes. It seems you thinking like a person and not like a horse of you would not have done this.

Read my web site so you will understand horses better and start to think like they do, then when you train them, you train from their view point and not yours (human)

ANSWER: Every time you allowed him to run out in fear, you teach him that you are not the leader and that you are not in control and he should not trust you. It does not matter what caused this, the fix is the same, you have to have him trust you, you have to have him see you as his leader, and you have to build his confidence so he will not want to run.

Bring him in the trailer and let him turn around and walk out calmly. Don't try and shut the door, load him and walk him out several times safely and calmly. Let him know that he can go in and not get trapped and shut and locked in, after doing this for few days, then open and close the gate while his if outside the trailer so he gets used to it going up and down and all the movement and noise. Then load him again and let him walk out. After he is really calm and listens to you well, THEN load him and move the door only an inch, and set it down and walk him out, then load him and pick the door up two inches and set it down and let him walk out, slowly get to where you can close it and then open it and walk him out, this is an easy fix, but most people want to do it fast and then it makes it worse and takes longer. The slow way is the fast way with horses.

As for your comment that he is used to being alone. You are wrong. No horse is happy alone, they need a herd or a buddy and they are miserable alone. They just accept it since they have no choice, so it may make you feel better thinking he likes it, I assure he he does not. This is a lot of the problem with his trust issues. If you locked me up alone and kept me away from others, I would not trust you either.

You have to one make sure you untie him so he will not get confused and scared. Now you have to start over and show him how to back out of a trailer slowly and controlled. So don't let him load all the way. Load just his front feet and back him out slowly. Do this a few times so he builds his confidence on back out slowly, then load only his front and maybe just one back foot, then back him out slowly, after few times of this, load him all the way and back him out slow (Don't tie him), after a few times of this he should learn that he can back out slowly and will not be trapped because someone forgot to untie him.

Well I would agree that all horses hate trailers even if they go in and are good. All horses dislike them, they fear them, they are trapped, they cannot move, the sounds are loud, they have to pee and poop on themselves, they can't see anything, why would any horse like this.

If trailering is not needed sure it would be better for no horse to ever be trailered. But if the desensitizing is done right a horse can be made to accept the trailer and reduce the nervousness. Read my sacking out section and my trailer loading page of my web site. The sacking out is on my horsemanship page. This will give you some ideas on how to see if you can get this horse to trust you and not be so scared.

I can only give you advice, unless you are in CA close to Sacramento and I could come see the horse. This horse just needs good desensitizing on her feet. You can get a soft stick or short whip or cane or anything to use as an extension of your hand. Rub and touch her feet and back legs all the time, only stop rubbing when she ignores it. Then give her break and go back and touch them again rub them and move things around her feet, after she gets good with that, tie a rope or sting to the end and rub them some more, then toss a rope about her back feet and let her get scared and throw it some more, keep throwing it around her feet and until she ignores it, then move to your hands, rub your hand down and move away, Don't pick up her back feet, just rub them and let her get used to you handling them and toughing them, then slowly start picking them up just an inch and only for a second. Then put them down. You

have to put them down before she reacts and pulls them, so you have to be fast on the release. Then work from there after she is good with you picking them up and putting them down for one sec then go for two, then for three seconds, it will take time. The problem is too many people want to hold the feet until the horse reacts and then they try to hold or let go and the horse leans that it needs to react to get release (foot down) so don't do that.

This can be fixed in about an hour or two if done right. If you get in a hurry or try to rush it or get it done in an hour, it will not work. The horse has to learn that standing still and letting you touch her feet is the right answer, not moving, kicking and running away. Since she has got release by moving and kicking she has been taught this and it is not her fault. Forget on why she is this way and stay focused on the the right way.

No horse is every trained forever and no horse is ever untrained forever, so this can be fixed. As for your "trainer" he or she is pathetic and is not much of a trainer. Any trainer that calls a young horse stubborn is a fool and does not know horses. This horse had some bad experiences and she needs time, patience and understanding to help her, she does not need someone who thinks they are a trainer and then can't get a horse to load.

I discuss trailer loading in detail on my site. After you read my trailer loading section, if you still don't know what to do, let me know.

Basically you need to move the horses feet, make her know that she either loads or has to keep moving or working. You can force her and make her more scared.

I have some other old questions about trailer loading so you can read the answers to them as well

This horse may have been beat or tied with chains before so he has a real fear so you need to help him with that. Sacking out will him with that and will build trust, that is on my horsemanship page. This horse needs to learn the trailer is not a bad place. Have the person he trust most to get in with him. Pet, brush him, give him treats and DON:T close the door. Tie the door open and only do good things in the trailer with him and let him learn he can learn any time he wants, over time he will like it and forget it is a scary place. Then after a couple of weeks of training everyday with door open, then close the door for 5 seconds and then open it, let him relax and then close it for 10 seconds, open it, for the first few times make sure he is not alone and the owner is in with him, after a few days of this you should be able to leave door closed for 10 mins. Then shut the door and go outside and give a treat, pet and stay with him on outside of trailer, after a few days of that, then maybe stay inside shut the door and have someone drive the trailer 10 feet, stop and let him out, keep doing everything in small steps, nice and slow and don't push too fast or try and get fast results. The more time you take, the less time it will take. I a couple of months, he will be fine and will have loaded and unloaded 100 times and will not see it as such a scary place and then work up from there. Don't lock him and take him on a 3 hour trailer ride and then expect him to want to get in again.

Question: I am 52 years old this is my granddaughters quarter horse mare 7 years old the horse was brought to us in a trailer to our property so we did not see it load now show season has arrived and the horse goes into the two horse step up straight trailer but than bolts out back before we can even get the butt strap near her or if we go towards the door it squeeks she flys out we do feed her in there but if she thinks we are going to shut the door she out of there fast real fast please help we tried a longer trailer like 4 horse and she gets in bolts back and rears up in side does better in our little one I have three other horses and the go in fine we tried putting her in with another and still the same please help

Answer: You are teaching very bad lessons. Every time you TRY and load this horse and fail, you teach the horse he can get out, you cannot control him, you are not a good strong leader, and you tell the horse not to trust you since you put in in a situation where it needs to take action in it's own hands and save it self.

I have a trailer loading page on my site, read it and if you have more questions, let me know.

QUESTION: Hi Rick,

I need some fresh views and I like your frank and honest answers. I agreed to help a lady load her horse, a 4 yr old. The mare has only been in a trailer twice in her life, nothing much has

been done with her of quality. I entered up and now I have to finish what I started.

I started out with basic ground work, hind quarters, front quarters, getting a bit going with having give to pressure, sending her forward off a feel, basics with my flag. It was not great but I was getting some good changes.

I loaded her front feet in the trailer, in and out several times until she felt pretty good and then asked for the hinds, rocking her in and out a couple of times and finally asking her to come all the way in. She did, but she didn't feel like she could stay for very long, so I backed her out before she did it on her own. When I asked her for her fronts again, she braced and would not come forward. I put a feel on the halter, released for every try at coming forward, she would come forward to the back of the trailer and then just brace. I tried increasing the pressure, using the tail end of my lead rope, my flag, a tarp and then some pretty good nips with the tail end of my lead. She would kick when I nipped her with the lead, but brace completely with her head in the trailer. I was still releasing for every try on her part. When she would lock up, I would go back to my ground work, work more at getting her feet better, and then ask her to step back to the trailer where again she would lock up. I would tap her with the lead, releasing for the try, and then nip when I wasn't getting any effort at all. I couldn't get a change. I am missing something. I know my timing wasn't always perfect, but I have never had a horse just quit and not try especially when they get a nip from tail end of my lead rope.

I owner had to leave and put the mare back in her pasture. I am so bothered about all of this.

Thanks for what ever you have to offer, even if it is a swift kick in the butt.

Anne

ANSWER: Well it sounds like you were on the right track with some release, you lost me and the horse when you tired to force him in. You don't want to use fear and flight as a motivator, so using a flag and tarp to scare a horse into another scary place (trailer) is confusing and gives the horse reason to question you leadership abilities and to trust you.

Trailer loading is about trust and leadership, you failed so the horse failed. You tired to force and make the horse enter, you should have stuck to what you can make the horse do (forward movement), you have to make the horse WANT to enter the trailer, not force him into the trailer.

You are NOT thinking like a horse. I will be your horse, so this is your horse talking: "what the hell does this two legged predator want, first I go into the trailer and trust her and follow her and then she wants to try and scare me with this stupid flag and tarp to get trapped in this small box trap, where I can't see very well and I can't run from danger. If she is hitting me with rope out here, what the hell is she going to do if I go in this box. Why does she want me in the box so bad? It can't be good if she is willing to hit me and sace me just to get me in there. She must be crazy if she thinks I am going to get in this box because she is hitting me with a rope and trying to scare me. I am scared since she is acting like a mean aggressive predator, I don't trust her since she is scaring and hurting me, so the last thing I am going to do is get into this box trap where no telling what she is going to do to me. I better watch myself with this thing, she is not instilling confidence with me and I better not listen to her very much since she is not consistent bears watching."

Your focus was on the trailer and winning. You forgot about the HORSE. You failed to accept small tries and give the horse the time it needed. You tried to force it too fast and the horse had to remind you that even with a rope, pain and fear, you are not stronger, you are not smarter, you can't force it and you did not win. So horse 1, you Zero. You got too fast and did not take the time you should have, so now you have to undo all the bad you taught and it will take you three times a long. Hence the saying: If you take the time it takes, it takes less time.

Next time, forget the trailer, pay attention to the horse. Work the horse without fear, tarp, and flags, just work on movement. Have the horse move in the direction you want and at the speed you want and stop when you want. All of this will say you are leader and you are in control, after you do this in front of the trailer, on the sides of the trailer, and by the rear door of the trailer, the horse will forget about the trailer, as you should. The only time the horse gets to stop and rest is at the entry door of the trailer, don't run the crap out of him, don't try and wear him down, just make him move and let him rest at the door. Once he is really locked

on to you then move him around and direct him into the trailer or towards the door, anytime he looks in the trailer, sniffs the trailer or attempts to put a hoof in or go in, YOU GO NEUTRAL, NO PRESSURE, NO LOOKS, NO TALKING, NO GOOD BOYS, NO NOTHING, make it very clear that you leave him alone and stop ALL pressure. If you do it right, let me say that again, "If you do it right", the horse will learn that the trailer is a safe place, the trailer gets him release of all pressure, the trailer is where he wants to be [make the right thing easy, wrong thing hard] the horse will see the trailer as comfort and no work or movement, the horse will WANT to be in trailer. If you do it wrong, "THIS IS A CLUE", the horse will tell you, listen to the horse.

There is a very big difference forcing and making a horse trailer load than making the horse WANT to trailer load. One is done by someone who does not understand horses, the other is done by the reverse. I will let you decide in what category you belong. :)

As for all horsemanship, "The horse is never at fault and is never wrong, if you got the wrong answer, you asked the question wrong the wrong way." ALWAYS listen to the horse, it will tell you if you doing it right or doing it wrong. This horse was screaming that you are doing it wrong, you were just so focusing on what you wanted, you did not listen.

A good question to ask is "if you were a horse, how would you like to be trailer loaded"?

I have a page on my site about trailer loading.

Rick

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Hi Rick...Thank you...so much. I am printing out your answer and putting it in my pocket. I did read your website. Thanks for all of your effort, that was a lot of work to help all of us.

I really needed to hear what you had to say. I have some dues to pay. I acted like a human and now I really owe the horse. This mare is teaching me a lot. I hope I'm smart enough to listen.

Anne

ANSWER: Calm seas never made a good sailor. Easy horses never make a good horseman/horsewoman.

As you long as you learn, don't blame the horse and listen to horse, they will continue to teach you. Not a short journey, so enjoy the ride. This horse is making you better, is making you think more like a horse, is making you change.

If you want your horse to change, you must first change.

If you always do what you have always done; you will always get what you have always got...

All good horse people have learned from many horses, made many mistakes and look back at how little we really knew, when we really thought we knew a lot.

Don't beat yourself up too bad, just try and avoid the same mistakes. This horse will forgive you and will have no hard feelings, just don't make her do it too often. :)

----- FOLLOW-UP -----

QUESTION: Hi Again Rick,

I won't bug you again, I know you are busy. Loaded the mare today. It felt good! I'm going to visit her at her new home and will be able to follow up a few more times. She is such a good teacher!

I'm keeping your answer in a special place. It was just the right thing at just the right time.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Answer: Glad I could help you, help the horse. :)

Happy trails,

Question: i hope this isn't a redundant question, but i did not find it on your site. we were just given a 15 year old TW gelding. a little spoiled, but responds well to correction. smart, well trained. loads very well.

it's after he's in the trailer that's a problem. the throws his chest at the trailer wall, and sits back to get his front feet up on the wall. he's had a couple of accidents in his last trailer, but mine is much bigger and a slant load. i thought he might be more comfortable in it, but no dice. first ride in it and he was throwing himself every time we stopped.

i can take some banging around, but i am afraid this could be dangerous if we are ever stuck in traffic, etc.

my background is in cutting. i have started and trained my own and done a fair amount of trailer training. i have never dealt with this.

my plan was to do some loading and unloading so that he didn't feel like we had to hit the road every time the door was shut. my hope was that i could start with really short loads and extend the time, unloading him when he was still...if he's ever still. also just some time standing tied to the hitching post, as part of his problem is lack of patience. ideas? advice? i'd like to do this correctly from the start.

thanks for your time.

Answer: ummm, this is different. I might try and use a stock trailer and drive him around in that so you can have someone follow and may video tape what he is doing when and why. Also a more roomy stock trailer with no panels and lots of room may not give him the comfort or leverage to do this and if he does do it, so what let him get out of what he gets in to, more room will lessen the chance of him getting hurt.

Tie time sounds like that may be an issue. I would also hobble train and teach the horse to accept being restrained, by hobbles and by being tied. Do some sacking out when hobbles are on and tied, again teach him to accept stress and pressure when restrained so you help him deal with his fear better. This may not be caused by fear and could be spoiled or he has never been taught not to do it.

I would also take out panels of trailer and after he ties good, tie him in trailer with door open and no panels, teach him to tie in trailer. Exposure always helps so the horse learns what to expect and leans that he can not change what happens.

I would also have someone watch this horse in the trailer that he does this in, as you drive slow and that person can see what is going on, maybe put a video camera in trailer so you can see what he does before he does what he does and then a tap on the brakes or something to distract him from doing what is about to do. Without knowing you can't time it correctly so hard to teach him to stop.

Not sure if this helps, but sounds like you are on the right track.

Tying or Pulling:

Well what you have done is taught him to pull. Every time you used a weak rope or snap or poor tie point, you have taught him that if you pull you can get away. So he has learned that lesson very well. Congratulations you are a horse trainer. I say it all the time, when you are with a horse you are training, you are teaching good or bad, everything you do the horse knows, watches and learns. A horse does not miss much, since it is their job to notice EVERYTHING or they will die or get eaten. Very simple to them, you pay attention or you die. So when you say he pulled a board off the wall and hit me, that implies he did something

wrong. I say YOU tied a horse to poor tie point and he pulled and you get hit by a board because of you poor decision to tie a horse to something that can be pulled away. That is why this is your fault and not the horses. Had you tied him to a strong and secure point then the wood would not have hit you, so YOU could have prevented this and it is not the horse's fault.

Question: I am 50 year old female. Rode quite a bit when I was young. Got back into horses 5 years ago. 3 year old quarter gelding kept in corral surrounded by other horses. Turn out everyday with others. Good manners will stand still with lead rope dropped to the ground. I can ride him on the streets with traffic, no spooking.

As soon as you tie him up he starts dancing in place, bobbing his head and lolling his tongue out the side of his mouth. Seems very nervous when he is tied. Vet checked and Teeth have been floated. Still does this even when tied up with other horses who are calm. Does not set back but will dance for hours while tied up. Stands still when untied.

Answer: This horse is a baby at 3, he has little patience. If you hobble train him, you can hobble him when tied and he will learn to stand still. If you tie him more, he will learn to stand still. Tie him when you feed him, tie him when you brush him, time him when you saddle him and ignore the dancing. If you are reacting to his dancing then he is getting something from it, if you ignore it, he will eventually grow tired of it. The more you tie him the better he will get.

And so what if he dances, he gets some exercise, he helps wear down his hooves, it keeps him active, let him dance the night away.

You may want to try and tie a couple of older horses on each side of him, they will not put up with him movements and may correct him for you, he may feel better and safer and calm down then can reduce to one after a few weeks and then no horses after a few weeks.

Question: I have a 16yr old TB mare. I have known her for 7 years now. I bought her about 5 years ago and had her for 3 of those years and never had an issue with her. She was stolen from me and I just recently found her and got her back. For some reason When ever she is tied she freaks, rears, falls, and gets hurt. I have been tacking her in her stall or just having her stand with the rope over her neck but I really want to be able to work through her problem without her getting hurt! What should I do?

Answer: You say she freaks out, she is scared and may be telling you that she does not trust or respect you enough to be tied. I have a web page on tying a horse, read that and it will help.

You say she rears, I say you are not tying her short enough to stop her from rearing. Tie her short with a good rope halter, NO buckles or snaps that can break, and when she pulls freaks or falls, just stand back and DON'T get involved or help, let her figure out that pulling gets her nothing. Just be there in case you need to help, but don't help unless she stops moving and jumping. You have to make sure and tie her safely so can't get hurt when she jumps around, she will get tired of pulling.

[Move to top of page ↑](#)

A man is more than just the worst thing he has ever done. -- The things we think we know keep us from learning the things we should know. --
Sometime Silence is the best answer

Rick Gore Horsemanship --- Think Like A Horse -- It is Never the Horse's fault!