

Danee's Horsemanship



Hints...

Response vs. Reaction

Does your horse give calm thought-out responses to your aids, or does he execute maneuvers as tense reactions? If your horse is reactive you may be able to get him to move where you want him to, but is he doing it in a relaxed methodical way? Is he following a feel, or simply escaping the direction you asked him to go in? Slow things down. Make it your goal to yield his shoulders and hindquarters without him picking up his head, getting tight, or having any brace in his body. Does his ribcage bend and melt around you as you ask for basic yields? Can you control how quickly he moves his feet? Ask him to do basic yields slowly. Look for big ground covering steps instead of quick choppy movements. Use small movements in your body instead of suddenly giving a big cue. It should feel like a dance, which means you must be graceful too! Use a small steady aid to ask your horse to move and then wait on his answer. If he is totally checking out, absolutely pick up the heat and let him know you are serious, but if he is blinking and looking and shifting his weight, that means he is trying to sort out the answer. Instead of escalating the aids, wait for him to come up with an answer. If he gets it right (or give such a good try that it counts anyways) relax your body language, especially through your hips and shoulders, to let him know that he found the correct answer and that you are done asking. Then reward. Pretty soon you will get a relaxed response instead of a tight reaction.



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