

A beginning rider wants to work on intermediate horsemanship. An intermediate rider want to work on advanced horsemanship, but an advanced horseman works on the basics.

9 Horse Behavior Questions

How do You Interpret “Bad Behavior” ?

1. When a horse shows an unwanted behavior, what is the first explanation that comes to mind?

Most of us were taught human-centric stories long before we learned how to observe the horse.

The first interpretation of what we tell ourselves often reveals more about our training culture than about what the horse is experiencing.

“Acknowledging the horse’s communication becomes uncomfortable when it contradicts what we want to believe.”



Alternative Horsemanship™ the Remote Horse Coach

2. If this behavior suddenly disappeared after a reprimand, would you search for the root cause of it?

Removing a symptomatic response does not automatically change the conditions that created it.

Learning to recognize the source versus the symptoms helps one to decipher and adapt the relevant education offered to the horse.

3. What was happening just before the unwanted behavior appeared?

Horse behavior reflects their mental and emotional state. Behavior rarely is an “all of a sudden” response, and often becomes more dramatic if the initial, subtle feedback from the horse was ignored or criticized, rather than addressed in a manner that had value to him.

4. How often do the same “behavioral issues” appear in unfamiliar circumstances, with various handlers, new locations, or during less-than-ideal settings?

Horse Behavioral Patterns reflect the inability to adapt, living in constant fixation or anticipation, and show holes in the equine’s education.

Without having a “common language” to help the horse learn how to learn, the environment, changes in daily routines, or human interaction can constantly be triggering the horse.

5. Does the horse show this behavior more when asked to respond faster or given more time to think, then react?

Human urgencies often amplify defensive responses if the foundational education has holes in it.

6. If the horse was blocked or contained from responding with this behavior to communicate, how might the initial unwanted behavior morph into another undesired reaction?

The horse’s communication is honest, regardless of whether the human can understand the root cause.

Letting go of suppression methods and learning how to find a common language to help the horse learn to think, search, and try evolves the interaction into a partnership rather than a dictatorship.

7. How does your emotional state influence what unfolds next?

Horses often mimic what the human is “bringing” to the interaction- one’s thoughts and emotions influence their mental awareness and acknowledgement of what the horse is conveying, and diminish the quality of physical communication, delay their timing, and lead to ineffective cues.

The more “self-centered” the human is about achieving their tasks- regardless of what the horse is experiencing- the more defensive the animal becomes toward their communication.

8. Does your focus tend to be on eliminating the behavior, or raising your self-awareness to become more “present” to learn to see the initial, subtle signs of a concerned horse?

It is easier to interrupt, address, and redirect the horse when one is open to learning and experimenting with their skills in real-time.

9. What would you need to observe, learn, or understand more clearly to eliminate labeling the horse’s unwanted responses?

Most human assigned “labels” reflect a lack of understanding and an insecurity in their ability to help the horse work through his worry, concern, anticipation, fear, triggers, etc. Shifting from, “I don’t want the horse to...” to “How can I help the horse to...” helps to grow and evolve horse-related skills.



Horse Behavior is not the problem. It is a signal.

When we learn to read the horse instead of silencing him, it eliminates hopeful, guessing, or “surviving the situation.”

Questions are Crucial for quality skill development to begin.

Curious about exploring the above questions? Do you want to increase your understanding of the horse?

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