

# **Foundation for Perfection:**

## **Learning How to Eliminate Resistance When Doing a Job Horsemanship, Stockmanship and Human Relations**

In the process of receiving my Masters degree, and from life experience in working with animals, I have developed a guide designed to eliminate resistance in doing a job. This guide, although originally designed for horses, is applicable to nearly every walk of life on the ranch, from horses, to cows, to dogs, and even to people. The Foundation for Perfection is the end result of 18 years of hands-on experience starting colts and training horses, 23 years working cows, two years of teaching and developing the guide, and two years of researching and testing the guide. Below is a copy of the Foundation for Perfection (developed and tested at Montana State University), and in italics is how the guide is applicable to other areas of animal behavior in addition to horses.

### **3 Causes of Resistance**

#### **1) Self Preservation**

- Due to lack of confidence (Slow down!)

*Whenever an animal loses confidence, self-preservation (fight or flight) kicks in. Once the animal's self-preservation begins to kick in, the animal's reasoning ability begins to decline. It is important to recognize this and use pressure and relief appropriately with all creatures; horses, cows, dogs, kids and especially wives!*

#### **2) Lack of Communication**

- Horse needs more time, patience, teaching (Slow down!)

*With any two animals, whenever clear communication and understanding is lost resistance begins to surface. If enough self-preservation and lack of communication is present, any animal will begin to operate in disobedience.*

#### **3) Disobedience (Resentment to commands)**

- Due to unwilling submission

*When communication is lost and self-preservation kicks in, any animal will begin to operate in disobedience. This can range anywhere from being numb, resentful, or wanting to physically or verbally (people) fight off any and all direction suggested.*

### **4 Factors to Eliminate Resistance**

**1) Willing Submission** – After an initial cue, the horse performs the task on a loose rein and with no leg pressure. **“It is the horse’s idea.”**

*With any animal, if a person can learn to set it up through pressure and relief, in a way that it is the animal's idea, all resistance will be eliminated. The best workers, whether they are horses, dogs, kids, or employees, are the ones that know their job and are truly passionate and enjoy what they do. The man who wrote the book “How to win friends and influence people” understood this concept in working with people.*

**2) Good Communication** – Learning to read, feel, and understand what the horse is saying in response to our request (Communication involves two individuals, what is the horse saying?). We communicate with horses through their **primary driving factors, underlying driving factors and feel, timing, and balance.**

**3 Primary Driving Factors:** Self-preservation, Comfort, and Companionship

1 Variable Factor: Hormones

**2 Underlying Factors:** Confidence, and Energy (motivation and determination)

↑ Confidence (↑ Comfort, ↑ Companionship) = ↓ Self-preservation

↓ Energy = ↓ Self-preservation

Confidence = Head height (Confidence ↑: Head height ↓), (Confidence ↓: Head height ↑)

As the **Energy level** decreases ~ **Self-Preservation** decreases ~ which opens the door to increase **Comfort** and **Companionship** (when presented in the correct manner).

*I have hypothesized and tested that animals have these driving factors and if used appropriately all resistance can be eliminated. However, if not used appropriately although the person may still get the job done, the job will be filled with resistance and lots of work. I keep these driving factors in mind when working horses, cows, dogs, in my marriage, and plan to use them with my kids. My dad was a master at decreasing the energy fueling our self-preservation so that he could direct us. Whenever I thought my Dad was a total idiot and I knew just about everything, I found myself some how getting bucked off, fixing lots of fence, or moving an entire hay stack from one location to another. Once my energy was down fueling my self-preservation, I was ready to look for the comfort in the direction he had to offer. (I elaborate much more on “driving factors” and their application to human relations in the “Animal Behavior Applied to Human Relations” handout).*

**3) Balanced Life to Direction Ratio** – The ratio is determined by the speed which we can willingly bring the life up and willingly direct it on set line (straight or curved), without losing “direction.”

**Life** – The ability to move the horse, with any given speed at any given time.

**1** = Inflict pain to get into a lope, **5** = Gallop at any given time.

**Direction** – When the slack is taken out of the rein, the horse puts the slack back in the rein with suppleness through the poll and loin.

**1** = Direction standing, **5** = Direction loping.

$Life > Direction = Confidence \downarrow$  in horse

a) **Vertical Direction** – (Atlas Vertebrae) – Up and down

- Break in the poll vertically; nose should be perpendicular to the ground.

b) **Horizontal Direction** – (Axis Vertebrae) – Left to right

**3 Signs – Poll**

1) Break in the poll horizontally (hairline curves between the ears)

2) Nose directly underneath the eye

3) Should not see any white in the eye (looking back not forward)

**3 Signs – Loin**

4) Front feet and hind feet travel on same path as the nose

5) Poll and loin should make a perfect “C”

6) Should be able to ride a perfect circle (“O” is half of a “C”)

c) **False Direction** – Give nose putting slack in the rein, but do not break in the poll

- Poll and loin are “I” shaped instead of a “C” shaped in turns

- Results in dropped shoulders and leaning out in turns, kicking hindquarters out or hopping in spins and roll backs, and not holding a pivot foot
- Also results in rubber-necked horses, hard mouths and stiff movements

**Stiff Poll and Loin** – Self-preservation, unwilling submission, no confidence

**Supple Poll and Loin** – Willing submission, comfort, companionship, confidence

*The method of direction varies depending on the animal. A horse is directed by rein and leg pressure, a cow through flight zone and balance point, a dog through hand and voice/whistle commands, and people use a wide range of methods for offering direction; verbal, written, body language, applied through action, etc. In order to eliminate resistance when doing a job, a creature must have a balanced direction (giving when contact is made) to life (get up and go, ambition) ratio. It is important that the life eventually gets some positive direction, or else it will lead to disobedience and misbehavior. This is extremely important in training young creatures; colts, puppies, replacement heifers, and kids. It is also important to make sure false direction does not begin to creep into the creature. This is giving on the outside, but on the inside the creature is operating in their self-preservation and seeking comfort and companionship somewhere else. This false direction often goes unnoticed to the untrained eye and it is this false direction, which causes huge wrecks under pressure situations; sorting alley, branding pen (ranch), financial cut backs, and emotional loss (work place and family).*

*Dogs – Direction in a horse is when “Slack is taken out of the rein and the horse puts the slack back in the rein with suppleness through the poll and loin.” Direction for a dog is similar, in that the person can pick up on the dog (voice/whistle) and they become supple and attentive to what the person is doing, not filled with self-preservation or seeking comfort and companionship away from the person. In a horse direction comes by merely taking the slack out of the rein (making a suggestion) and the horse willingly puts the slack back in. The same is true with a dog. Solid direction in a dog would be: After the owner makes contact with the dog (saying their name once, or whistle once) the dog stops whatever they are doing and are 100% attentive to what the owner wants, stopping whatever they are doing instantly and looking for a suggestion from the owner. Similar to riding a colt the first few times in a safe environment (round pen), it is important that direction is established the same way in a dog. A person does not achieve direction in a colt, the first time having a bit in their mouth trying to sort wild Braham cattle in an alley while the horse is tight and wanting to buck. The same is true with a dog. Direction is not instilled in a stock dog when they have livestock in front of them and their self-preservation is going wild. In the same way you would wreck a young horse with too much pressure when they have not learned to “give” to the bit, yelling at a dog when they have not learned to “give” to their owner’s voice won’t work.*

*Cattle – “Cows learn to willingly move off pressure when the rider comes into the flight zone and balance point.” Direction in a horse is, “After initial contact the horse puts the slack back in the rein with suppleness through the poll and loin.” In order to be supple through the poll and loin it is impossible to have self-preservation in the horse. When an animal’s self-preservation mechanism is engaged they become stiff through the poll and loin to “fight or flight,” and their reasoning ability rapidly declines depending on the amount of pressure applied. The same is true with a cow. In order to effectively direct a cow using a balance point, a person must read the flight zone and make sure the animal’s self-preservation is not engaged for an extended period of time. Otherwise, like riding the green horse in a sorting alley, or*

*trying to call your yearling pup back once they have began chasing livestock, it is hard to attain direction once self-preservation is fully engaged.*

#### **Four Levels of Directed Life**

- 1) Submit the life (Stage 1 Mechanical Foundation)
- 2) Fill them with life (With no signs of self-preservation)
- 3) Direct the life (1<sup>st</sup> Straight lines, 2<sup>nd</sup> Curved lines)
- 4) Led by the life (Stage 2 Mechanical Foundation)

**(Life = Hindquarters & Driving Factors)**

**Submitting the Life: Dogs and Horses** – *Submitting the life, or stage one of the mechanical foundation of maneuvers, is very important in both dogs and horses. Submitting the life (driving factors/hindquarters) is basically the safety valve that keeps things under control when self-preservation starts taking over. This is often referred to as “doubling” and is the ability to disengage the horse’s hindquarters from pushing the horse; running, bucking, rearing. Doubling is a mechanical maneuver most often not involving willing submission, but when done appropriately leads to direction. Doubling is very important in both dogs and horses and the amount of pressure to double the animal depends on the amount of self-preservation fueling the animal and their understanding of the maneuver. With horses, I teach them this from the first time I come in contact with them either from another horse, or from the ground (tying them to a post if need be).*

*With dogs the best way to double a dog is to put a leash around their neck and softly say “aaahhhh” right before they hit the end of the lead rope. Before the slack is taken out of the leash pull the rope firmly so the dog hits the rope like a calf in calf roping. Then call them to you by name and pet them offering them comfort and companionship until they are totally relaxed, or want to leave again. Pretty soon the dog will learn that when they hear “aaahhhh” they should stop what they are doing or “disengage their driving factors” and look to you for direction. The secret to effectiveness in “doubling” leading to “direction,” is setting it up so that you can win every time. Once you have the leash off the dog, or you are on the horse’s back, only try to double the horse or dog when you know it will be effective. Don’t wait until self-preservation is at its peak, double the animal before self-preservation starts to escalate.*

#### **4) Solid Foundation of Maneuvers (2 parts)**

**Part 1 (Mechanical)** – Ability to move the 3 parts of the horse (head and neck, front quarters/feet, and hindquarters/feet) in any direction to accomplish any job.

Four stages:

- Stage 1 – Stop the inside front foot, the other feet move forward around it.
- Stage 2 – Hindquarters pulling the horse in a reverse motion.
- Stage 3 – Lateral movement of front feet and hind feet together.
- Stage 4 – Stop the inside hind foot, the other feet move forward around it.

*The mechanical foundation is basically when the creature understands a few basic maneuvers needed to do their job. For cows this is when they learn that if a rider comes into their flight zone, they can come off the pressure and find a hole (opening in the pasture, gate, trailer, etc.) to find comfort. The cow learns when pressure is applied there is always a place to go that is free from pressure. For dogs this could be a few set mechanical commands that never change; “way to me,” “come by,” “get’m up,” “lay down,” and “get back.” For people this is basically the mechanics of your job, the skills a person needs to get their job done. Often*

*employees in the workplace possess this component in job completion, however, the other variables to eliminate resistance go unnoticed by the employer and as a result the business/organization operates with resistance between employees and employers limiting overall productivity.*

*Dogs – (Not necessarily in any order)*

*Stage 1 – Get em ' up*

*Stage 2 – Stop: Get back/lay down/get out*

*Stage 3 – Left*

*Stage 4 – Right*

*Cows – (Not necessarily in any order)*

*Stage 1 – Find a line and move out (for trailing cows)*

*Stage 2 – Stay in a given area with the herd (for holding “rodea,” sorting, branding, etc.)*

*Stage 3 – Load: trailer, chute, loading dock, etc.*

*Stage 4 – Find a hole when pressure is applied (sorting cows out of the rodea, pushing cows through a gate, loading, etc.)*

**Part 2 (Mental)** – Horse and rider begin to receive insight into how they can move together in perfect unity to accomplish a job: Horse experiences willing submission, good communication, a balanced direction to life ratio, and part 1 of solid foundation of maneuvers all at the same time.

It's like you are riding in the dark and somebody switched on a light, all resistance left and it made perfect sense to *you* and the *horse*. The horse becomes as light as a feather, moving in perfect unity with the person; no resistance in doing the job. These are the “ah-ha” moments when riding a horse. It is by multiplying these “ah-ha” moments, that we are able to *build* and *keep* a “foundation for perfection.” The goal is to multiply these “ah-ha” moments from brief seconds, to minutes, to hours; until we are left with no more resistance and find ourselves riding in absolute perfection.

Three Stages:

**Stage 1 – Brief seconds during the ride**

**Stage 2 – Minutes during the ride**

**Stage 3 – Consistency during the ride**

*The mental component comes in when all self-preservation, lack of communication and disobedience leaves and the creatures begin to operate with willing submission, good communication, a balanced direction to life ratio, and solid foundation of mechanical maneuvers. This is when working cows, using dogs, training horses, spending your life with someone, and working with people becomes lots of fun and highly productive.*

God Bless!

Wade Black