

TO WHISPER OR NOT TO WHISPER

By Samuel p. Brown

This column will be appearing each month. Its sole purpose is to give you the horse lover a better understanding of Gods" most glorious creature the horse. Let us begin with the basics. A proper foundation in any endeavor in life is most important ! As it gives one the knowledge needed to be successful. The basics also will give you the ability to solve problems as they arise.

*The first and foremost truth one needs to understand is the simple fact that horses are **PREY ANIMALS**. This most simple truth will and eventually should answer most of your questions concerning why your horse acts the way he does. Sadly this truth is never addressed by trainers and instructors.. If you are blaming your horse for the way he acts I'll bet no one ever told you this fact, or if they did you most likely still don't understand all that this entails.*

Well let's shed some light on some things. Horses by nature have what we like to refer to as a "prey-flight" instinct. In other words when they get scared it's because they sense their life is in danger and will flee to get away from the situation.(not the most desirable attribute for safety sake) I don't mean to jump ahead of topic here but your reaction to their reaction is half the problem, it actually amplifies the situation. How your horse reacts to "fear" is normal. You cannot blame him. (Although folks do) out of ignorance hopefully. We've all been to the local rodeo and seen those quarter horses out there amongst the whip cracking ,lights flashing ,loud music ,fireworks ,chasing cows and bulls the rodeo clown with all his props. Another day in the park, leg cocked just hanging out. So people think this is just privy to the breed. Not so, these horses didn't start out like this it took time spent and training. Quarter horses are simply the breed used for this sort of thing ,it's what folks do with them. You can get any breed to do this stuff, quarter horses are simply designed for this sport. Thoroughbreds, warm bloods etc aren't used in the rodeo arena so they get a bad rap for not being able to tolerate this sort of

hoop-la. Not so! they can be just as tolerant of all of all this sort of activity . They simply don't hang out at rodeo arenas much.

Prey animals are mainly concerned about survival. His head goes down for grass as soon as he gets off the trailer. He seeks the least stressful place to be, usually with their buddies in the field. They need leadership in order to feel safe and secure. You need to become that for your horse!! This most basic instinct will vary from breed to breed, from horse to horse However the prey-flight instinct is common to all. The bottom line to all this is that a horse **LEARNS** in a very specific way. If you are of any age, been around the block a few years now you most likely know how you learn new things best. It behooves us to know the same for our equine friends. It will make the whole process more fun for both! Until next month, keep it safe, keep it natural. SamuelPotterBrown@gmail.com

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