

WORKING WITH MINDS OR MOTORS???

Regardless of whether you train your own horse, or you have purchased an educated horse, there are some important yet extremely simple guidelines that I believe can make all the difference between winning, failure & lasting the distance.

A foal is born with a very open mind. They are curious, bold, excited & have a magnificent zest for life.

From a tiny baby of only a week or two old your horse was able to run fast, stop hard & turn on a dime.

He did this playing in the field just for fun. Nobody taught him to do it!

I am unaware of a horse who has not, to some degree, displayed this natural behaviour with ease & thorough enjoyment at some moment in their life.

Yet unfortunately, when it comes to barrel racing, where the same natural movements are required to complete the pattern, I notice many horses do not approach this task with the same enthusiasm.

IF YOU ARE AT A CROSS ROADS IN YOUR BARREL RACING PROGRAMME CONSIDER ASKING YOURSELF ...

WHY does my horse view this fun sport as a boring task?

WHAT has changed this horse and his enthusiasm for his own natural play?

The first thing I consider in my efforts to help you and your horse is this...

How do you, as the contestant, view barrel racing?

Is it Fast? Furious? Aggressive? Tough?

Or

Smooth? Agile? Calculated? Rhythmical? Precise? Natural? Easy?

Are you... Nervous? Unsure? Fierce?

Or

Confident? Keen? Exhilarated?

Is the run going to be predictable or do you fear the unknown?

Do you consider the barrel course as requiring skills that are already natural to your horse?

Or

Do you think that you are teaching your horse all these skills as if he never knew how to run hard, rate & turn with agility from birth?

When you have answered these questions it will be clear to me how you feel as you approach a barrel race, how you answered question 1 & ultimately how your horse has come to feel positive or negative about the sport.

Now that it has occurred to you that this special horse knew these skills well before he knew you, does that change your feelings toward educating him?

Perhaps now you may consider yourself as a **team** learning how to execute the course together!

Have you always viewed your horse as needing to learn from you, or have you considered that you may benefit from learning from your horse also?

If you view your horse in this way you will provide yourself with some guidelines to why he may not be at his happiest & running as well as you would like.

Here are the guidelines that you will address...

1/ He was able to perform these skills naturally.... BUT... how quick?

2/ He was able to perform these skills naturally... BUT...did he do this for fun or fear?

3/ He was able to perform these skills naturally...BUT ...what was his style?

For example: Did he run round & turn smoothly?

Did he run straight & turn sharp?

Was he able to run & turn efficiently without much rate?

Or did he need to steady down for his approach to a turn?

Answer these questions & you will learn some very important factors about your horse...

1/ How naturally efficient he is.

2/ How much he enjoys the task.

3/What was the easiest style for him to approach the task.

Address those answers & you will reveal to yourself, to a greater extent...

1/ If you are working with a 1d, 2d, 3d or 4d prospect?

2/ If your horse is going to enjoy the sport?

3/ How to work with his individual style to get the very best out of him.

If you have not sought out the answers to these questions before you began training your horse, you may now have the tools to work with when it comes to answering...

“Why doesn’t my horse enjoy barrel racing?”

In a following editorial I will elaborate on the importance of working with your horses own natural style & how it will benefit you, but for now I will leave you with this thought...

“If you train your horse like he has a motor instead of a mind...

Don’t be surprised if he starts going like a truck & the wheels fall off!”

Best wishes for your success

Ox Bek Knudsen.