



ICELANDIC HORSEMANSHIP

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- THE CONTACT -

There exist many different possibilities how we can use a horse and for what purpose we want to use it. Some people like to ride in their free time, others are working professionally with horses. Others just simply want to have fun with their horse, while others work in a precise and exact way to reach a certain goal.

What all different kinds of horsemanship have in common, is, that we interact with another being that means we are in a contact with it. That is the thing that gives us the greatest pleasure and

it is the reason why we ride, because we search for the contact with the horse and we enjoy it.



First contact

When does it start?

The contact can become something very intimately and fulfilling and it happens more often than we might expect. Every single second that we spend with the horse counts for it, but also the time that we don't spend with our

horse or the distances in between every contact has an influence on it. The longer these distances are the smaller is the contact and the more time we spend with the horse, the more profound becomes the contact. Every day's dealings with the horse is contact; we create for example contact when we feed the horse, or when we take it out of its box and we brush it, or just simply when we stand close to the horse and look at it. The contact is so diverse and frequent that we can hardly imagine.

A very important



Even the simplest things count

moment is the first contact we have with a horse, the very first time we enter into the horse's awareness. The horse creates an image of us, which can, and very probably will, influence all future contact which we are going to have with that horse.

The communication

An important part of the contact is the communication. A good contact to the horse allows us a good communication, but on the other hand it is also important that the communication happens in a good and fair way, so that there can be created a good contact and so that the contact can improve. These two things are

connected to each other and work through one another. Communication is the way how a person and a horse get to understand each other and it is part of a good contact; through the communication the contact can be established, improved and deepened.

Contact cannot be established without trust. The horse is a flight

animal and it needs a leader which it can respect and trust. If that doesn't exist, there is a fold between the human and the horse, and the contact cannot grow over this fold. That means that the contact is limited and restricted.

Important is the interest in each other. If you have a good contact to your horse, then it shows interest in what its trainer is doing and for the things which its trainer asks for. The trainer must always think of a way how to raise the horse's interest and how to keep that. It is also important that the horse feels that its trainer is interested in it as well. The trainer needs to take care of his horse, be worried about it and pay attention to its needs.



Contact is very important when you are working with your horse...

Should the horse feel that the trainer is not interested, then it will not generate interest by itself, but more and more lose the interest, willingness



every member of the herd. This must be considered in every day's handling of the horse, so that a life together with our horse is possible; we

ourselves, if the horse doesn't respect us and if it doesn't pay attention to us. If we are able to take the leading position, however not through intimidation and fear, but through trust and respect, then the horse is ready to be with us and to accomplish things for us and that without always questioning us. Through this we gain a new and better quality of living and working together with the horse.

and motivation and the contact cannot proceed positive.

Horses' nature

As in many other matters the question "Why" has a big importance. First of all it needs to be said that it is a natural behaviour for the horse to look for contact with other individuals, as it is a herd animal. This means that the horse wants the contact to happen and that it even needs the contact; the need for contact is inborn. In a herd there exists a certain hierarchy, which needs to be respected by

must take a leading position. Otherwise the horse will force his will on us and that makes any collaboration with it impossible, because horses usually don't like to work voluntarily; in some situations it can even become a danger to

Who am I...to my horse

It is also important to say, that contact is the base and the preparation for everything else that will follow. The first interaction with the horse is the contact and the communication with it. If



The contact created from the ground, the rider takes with him into the saddle

it would be for nothing else, only for that reason we would need to take care that we build the contact up in a positive and good way; if the spring is poisoned, also the rest of the river will be poisoned.

It is always important to ask yourself: what opinion does the horse have of me? Because always when we get into the horses awareness or if we ask it for something, it will ask exactly the same question to itself and it depends on its conclusion, if and how it will react. This is always valid, for every single topic and that is the reason, why the horse

shall attain an answer which stays in favour for us.

The beauty

In the end there needs to be mentioned one more reason why a good and healthy contact to the horse is necessary: just simply for ourselves. If we have a good contact to our horse, then we can feel that, and if we have a bad contact, then we can also feel that. If the contact is good, then the time that we spend with the horse will be given another quality and the togetherness will be raised to another level. Every experience will

become something beautiful and unforgettable. The contact to the horse can grow into something profound and deep, just like an extremely close friendship, maybe even comparable to a marriage; in any way an intimate relationship. Who however thinks, that it is not necessary to create a good contact to his horse will never be able to achieve such things. Only through a good and deep contact with our horse we can witness something like that. And every human who cares about the horse (and this should be everybody who searches for the contact

with the horse), wants to experience that. And exactly for that reason we should search for a good contact to our horse, to being able to witness such a good and intimate relationship, clearly also for ourselves.

