

Relationship Riding®

By Barbra Ann King

A STEP FORWARD IN THE EVOLUTION OF HORSEMANSHIP PART I

Relationship Riding brings ancient equine teachings to a modern world while challenging conventional methods.

A long time ago, around the 11th – 13th century, warriors on horseback hit the battlefields, holding a shield in one hand and a sword in the other. Most rode bareback and bridle-less. Together, horse and rider confronted the enemy, charging and stopping, moving right and left, backing up, rearing, and performing some amazing moves to conquer the enemy.



Best Friends

All communication between horse and rider was done through the body, heart, and soul. These moves are still performed today by the famous Lipizzaner stallions, but under different circumstances.

Horses haven't changed over the centuries, but humans certainly have. If it was possible to face life threatening situations back then while riding stallions bitless, we should be able to ride our performance and pleasure horses with no problem. We're not going to battle with our horses (although some of you may feel as if you are some days!); we are choosing to have them in our lives as companions for recreation. The horses that were ridden on the battlefield did not have extensive training and none of them "obeyed" their riders based on negative reinforcement. There was a much deeper "training" method going on that allowed the horse to respond out of willingness.

Relationship Riding offers a philosophy that challenges conventional training and riding. A lot of research and experience backup this technique: the horses themselves offered their knowledge and expertise, patiently allowing me to experience and develop Relationship Riding based on what makes sense to them, in a natural and non-defiant way. There are thousands of years of knowledge cantering our fields, graciously offering information for the benefit of all. It's up to us to listen and learn from them.

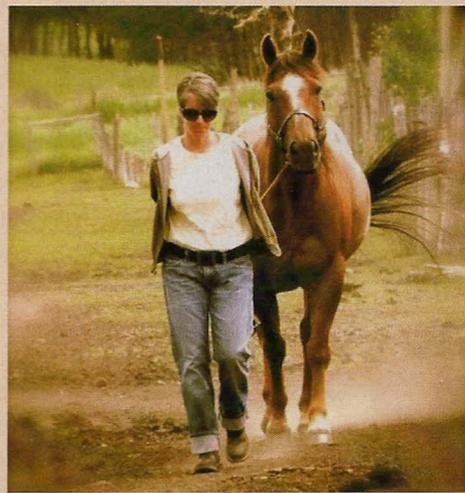
Relationship Riding teaches True Equine Leadership. Horses always follow their equine leaders so if our horses can see us as equally good equine leaders, they will also follow us, not only physically, but with their heart and soul. Once our horses have accepted us as leaders, they will want to follow us willingly because they will know that is where they are the safest. But, we cannot "elect" ourselves as leaders. Our horses have that prerogative. Once you have proven yourself as a good leader and are chosen by the horses to be that leader, all your training problems will slowly disappear. That's a promise I make to you, and I have 20 years of experience working with horses who were labelled sour, stupid, bad, dangerous, unrideable, unstoppable, and the list goes on.

In next month's article, I will talk about True Equine Leadership as well as Dominant versus Non-Dominant riding and training techniques that are available to horse owners.

Enjoy the journey!



Freedom in riding



Rudy and Tara

Barbra Ann King is an internationally known horse behaviour specialist, founder of the Relationship Riding® method and a published author living in Alberta, Canada. She specializes in rehabilitating horses and optimizing performance. She travels year-round sharing her passion with like-minded horse owners and offers video consultations for troubleshooting through her website.

(See her listing in Business Services under TRAINERS)