



Linda Parelli MasterClass

Netherlands 2017

Hello my dedicated students!

Thank you for a wonderful five days together. It was an honor to teach you and I very much enjoyed your passion for learning as much as possible. Eef and Annemyke made it such a joy with their fantastic facility, hospitality and of course the wonderful meals from Jenze!

Aside from all the new techniques you learned, not to mention getting re-motivated and re-inspired to be the best you can be, there are three big takeaways I wanted you to especially get:

1. How to be a **BETTER LEADER**.
2. How to be a **BETTER RIDER**.
3. How to have a **HAPPY HORSE!**

So, here are a few reminders for you...

BETTER LEADER!

- **The leader is the one with the PLAN.**

Just make sure you have a better plan than your horse and you are willing to stick to your plan by being passively persistent in the proper position.

- **Have a clear picture of what you want your horse to do:**

- What should it look like?

(Attitude, expression, body shape, way of moving, energy level, etc.)

- What should it feel like?

(Harmonious, light and responsive, willing, rhythmic, calm, connected, etc.)

- **Give it a score: 7's OR BETTER!**

Shoot for 7, 8, 9, 10's and when the score is lower ask yourself what needs to be better in order to get and 7+... And then fix it!

- **The goal is harmony.**

This means you don't release after a step or two, you keep going until your horse understands that being in harmony with you, and what you're doing, is the goal. *If I walk, you walk. If I canter you canter. If I go sideways, you go sideways. If I do a flying change, you do a flying change. Etc.* Think of it like dancing together. And remember, YOU are the leader in this dance.

- **Stop *playing* the Seven Games and start *using* them:**

- The first three games are your ABC. The next four games are patterns. Now its time to use them instead of just making your horse recite the alphabet over and over!

- As your warm up:

Calm, connected, responsive is the goal of your warm up, and remember that your warm-up should feel EASY for you and your horse because you are getting ready for learning or advancing.

Read your horse and see what he or she needs. If calm go for responsiveness. If your horse is not connected, then this should help them start paying more attention to you. For a longer list on strategies, revisit Touchstone 4 in the Savvy Club.

Don't start with the Circling Game, especially if your horse doesn't like it! Its important not to turn this into lungeing by letting your horse run in mindless circles in any kind of gait he chooses. Give your horse other things to do – Touch It, Figure 8, obstacles, back through gate, up and down a hill, sideways fast down the fence, etc. and then finish with the Circling Game so you can check trot and canter before riding.

- To advance your skills

Look to the Levels Program on the Savvy Club to give yourself things to do and focus on achieving. It helps you be more progressive as your horse's teacher, especially if you tend to run out of ideas or get a bit boring and repetitive. Stay progressive and have a plan! The Savvy Club Levels Program is designed to help you do that.

- **Three things to get good at - Backwards, Sideways, Sideways Fast down the fence, Circling Game.**

The better your horse goes backwards and sideways, the better he does everything else – provided you are particular about your horse's body position and responsiveness.

- Make sure your backup is an 8 or better on the ground – Porcupine Game with your hand on the halter, Yo-Yo style wiggling the rope, and when mounted with contact. Aim for 20 steps to be easy, but not 20 every time! Vary the amount of steps and test a few steps at least every day. If its not a 7+, fix it.
- Sideways needs to be improved in three ways: Down the fence, without a fence, and sideways fast (down the fence at about 45 degree angle). Pay attention to your horse's body shape – the straighter the better, not looking at you, body more straight than curved, and hind legs need to be crossing. Don't do the same tests every time, but do test them in some way. Sideways fast is a great way to improve your horse's emotional fitness and athletic ability. Again, don't over do it. Just a couple of times a week is fine.
- When riding, keep your horse's body more straight – especially the neck, and stay upright and balanced rather than leaning over. Its time to refine and not let your neighbors see what you're doing!
- Be sure that your horse understands what you want – that they are mentally putting effort into backwards and sideways, that they recognize them as a movement or task rather than just yielding to your hands or legs.

[Circling Game – a new level of partnership.

There are mutual responsibilities in a partnership and the Circling Game is one of the best ways to teach and test it. The problem most people have with Circling Game is they are not particular enough so the horse doesn't really get the goal and mentally focus on maintaining gait, maintaining direction (which includes body shape) and looking where they are going (not outside the circle). Also they try to do more laps before the horse is good at just a few.

- As you move into Level 3-4+ this is now about quality, not just quantity. We used to be happy that the horse went around without us having to keep it moving, but now the *WAY* your horse circles is the key. Laps will come easily once you have this level of respect and understanding.

Remember: Don't go to neutral until your horse is circling with the quality you want and, when you're fiddling with him until he does, be sure you stay in your spot, pivoting if necessary. Don't move towards him or walk around in mindless circles yourself!

- When the horse is circling the way you want, leave him alone and be neutral – which means standing relaxed and trusting your horse to do his part. From your horse’s perspective, he’s got to be thinking: “*How do I get them to stand still and relax?*”

BETTER RIDER

Freestyle makes you a good rider because you learn how to use balance and “go with the flow”, to become part of your horse.

Finesse makes you a polished rider because you learn more about position, precision, gracefulness and feel. How your horse moves and how stable you are in your body, elbows and hips becomes really important - it helps your horse to move better, use his body in a healthy way and enriches your harmony together.

It is important to train your body all the time, not just when you're riding. I crunch my dots when I'm driving, sitting, standing – I guess the only time I don't is when I'm sleeping! I also try to point my tailbone forward so my pelvis stays vertical and doesn't tip forward making my back hollow and tight.

Standing in your stirrups is the best way to train your lower leg, and then having a standing feeling – hovering when you're riding with finesse or collection - is critical for your horse to be able to lift his back. (*In Touchstone 1: Savvy & Safe, Pat's demo of standing in your stirrups - at all gaits and through transitions - is impressive, and an important goal for you to achieve*).

Ride With Your Torso!

Steer with your hips and will help you stop using your reins too much – which makes horses much happier! Use your elbows so you can relax your hands and keep them soft.

Give! “Its not a trap”

Remember your horse's primary needs for safety. You need to show your horse it is not a trap by giving and releasing regularly, but you also need to teach your horse to yield. Analyze the situation through the categories of response and this will help you to improve your horse's confidence and responsiveness.

I want to remind you that there is a LOT on this in your Savvy Club Touchstone #10 – Balance & Posture, as well as in my DVDs: The Finesse Training Sequence and Precision Box... and even more now in my Finesse Training Manual.

HAPPY HORSE!

To be happy, horses need **Safety, Comfort and Play!** This is how you use horse psychology, when you know you are satisfying their needs.

Remember that *contact* can be challenging for horses (not to mention riders) because they can feel trapped, so getting your horse to Category 3 (seek the comfort) in their quality of response is an important step. Teach your horse to understand, respect and trust the boundaries you set up with your seat, the bit, reins, your elbows and hips... Hold and WAIT, and remember to show them *"Its not a trap!"*.

The more stable you are in your body the more your horse will seek to be in harmony with you... and the more 'feel' you have for your horse's experience the softer and more trusting he or she will become.

NOTE: To progress in your Finesse, I recommend learning The Finesse Training Sequence & The Precision Box (both are available on DVD)... AND, The Finesse Training Manual helps you put it all together.

And if you ever get stuck, be sure to contact your Parelli Professional, a Finesse Specialist, or even your concierge (if you are a gold member) for help. They all have a direct line to me if needed.

Thank you for your dedication, I respect this more than anything. When I think back over my life and career, the one thing that keeps coming to the top is the word "dedication" because whatever your goals are, you will never reach them unless you dedicate yourself to them. Most people have no idea what that means... but you do. I saw you. I know what it took for you to get here and to apply what you learned this past five days.

Stay on track, practice and improve what you've learned - your horse deserves it!

See you next time!

Yours naturally,

