

Craig Cameron

Double Horn Ranch—The Making of Great Horses & Horsemen

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

When I am asked what the most important ingredient of horsemanship is I answer there are many. The most common components are patience, consistency, understanding, effectiveness and repetition. Others are the ability to communicate, feel, timing, balance and of course many, many more. Some say the most important things are proper or good equipment. Some rely on pain, fear, intimidation and all sorts of gimmicks. Of those ingredients some are good and some are bad. Every horseman must follow his own call and the trail of experience. An open mind will show each of us the right way; the true way of the horse.

Of all these factors there is one component we do not hear enough about. That component is passion. The power of passion or a love of what you are doing cannot be overlooked. Like any art form great horsemanship comes from passion. To be successful as a horse person, one must love and believe in what they are doing with the horse whether you are a weekend horseman, trail rider or a world class competitor. The main requirement to consistent success is passion of the job. Too many of us are just going through the motions. We are getting mechanical in our training techniques and in our relationships with the horse. There is nothing mechanical about the natural horse. However, at many reinings, cuttings, western pleasure, dressage, barrel racings or any horse event I am seeing an unfortunate amount of mechanically ridden and riding horses. I know the amount of time it takes to make great horses. I know it takes hard work and lots of repetition to achieve the understanding between horse and rider to make the oneness and greatness we all desire.

I just hope we will not sacrifice the passion or love of the horse over our goal to make the good horse. There is a reality here not an illusion. I think the horse knows when we like them and when we do not. I believe the horse feels when we are nervous or scared of him. I try to make my time with my horse the highlight of his day. I try to give him some place to go and something to do. I want to make my training schedule a little different from day to day, not just the same old drag and drill. If I am just trying to hurry through his routine, not working each horse as an individual and giving them the time each horse needs, then I am becoming mechanical. I try to have a working and personal relationship with each horse. I know it can be done, because I have done it many times with many horses. These horses know me and I know them. I have a relationship with these horses. They are my friends. This does not mean I do not have discipline with these horses because I do. Everything needs discipline to learn and grow. However, discipline does not need to be the enemy of enthusiasm, discipline is an art form. It is done where it has a learning and positive effect. Great horsemen ride with discipline as well as passion and vision. Vision is different from sight. Vision is the capacity to believe in what my heart sees, what others can't see. Vision is seeing positive possibilities where others see only negative possibilities.

Great horsemanship comes down to passion or a love of what you are doing. No, I am not afraid to say I love the horse; as a matter of fact it is probably a crime the way I love a good horse. I hope you will find the love and ride with passion as well as always striving to learn and do

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better. You don't have to say it, explain it or even understand it to know it. You just have to feel it. So to all my relations, my friends, my horses, I say thank you.

—*Craig Cameron*