

Thomas Herding Technique

Discovering the Communicated Equine

Glossary of THT terms

Behavioral Overcompensation: Occurs when one sensory avenue either by physical limitation or psychological aberration overcompensates, resulting in body language eruption and/or loss of mental and physical efficiency.

Buddying-Up: Occurs when a mid-level herd horse seeks the comfort of movement with another horse. Buddy-up horses are dependent on another horse for safety, direction and rhythm of motion.

Emotional conformation: the mental and emotional *psychology* of a horse, that makes up who they are. It includes the way they communicate, interpret stimulus, and almost everything they do, including compete on the on the racetrack.

Group herd dynamic (GHD): a horse's awareness of the group around them. It goes hand in hand with the ability to interpret multiple stimuli. A horse with a good group dynamic can see/feel the big picture and where the horse itself fits into that picture. A healthy group dynamic is integral for a horse to run well through traffic or from far back in a race. Many horses with big group herd dynamics will prefer to be near the back of the field early in a race in order to read the other members of the groups' intentions. They are in fact sizing up the field and determining where they want to go. The U.S. champion mare Zenyatta is the classic example of a horse with a big group dynamic (she also had a big individual dynamic, which she could turn on when needing to fight for space and pass horses).

Herd dynamic: a general term we use to describe a horse's overall herd level (its group and individual herd dynamics combined).

Individual herd dynamic (IHD): the dynamic that involves just the self and a singular target. Example: a horse engages in a pace duel with one other horse, not thinking about the rest of the field, the length of the race, or anything else but that one-on-one struggle. Horses that rely too much on individual herd dynamic will get lost if they have too much stimuli to interpret. Front-running horses that only run their best races when they are near the front of the herd, where there are limited stimuli, are usually very high on individual herd dynamic. A high individual herd dynamic is integral to being a good racehorse, but the best horses are strong in both dynamics. When you're only operating on one dynamic, it's easier to have the rug pulled out from under you. And when things don't go their way, individual dynamic horses tend to fall apart.

Space infraction: When one horse infringes upon another horse's space.

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206 Homeville Road Cochranville, PA 19330

Telephone: 610-593-4889

Email: stblemaster@thomasherdingtechnique.com



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Anticipatory Response: A response that comes from anticipation, based on environmental circumstances. An anticipatory response precedes the actual stimulus. It is a learned response that becomes a habit. The anticipatory response mechanism can be used for learning and growth. However, an improperly functioning sequence can create aberrations and inefficiency.

Egg: *The horse's egg* is the space around the horse, varying in actual foot-distance by the individual that is its personal space and area of influence. Shaped much like an egg is shaped, it is the area where stimuli are efficiently interpreted. It is directly related to the herd dynamic of the horse; that area around the horse that it manages.

Emotional Conformation Profiling (ECP): The study of a horse's Mental/Emotional Intelligence & Ability in three key areas; Trainability, Herd Dynamics, and Behavioral Genetic Traits.

Mental Efficiency Zone (MEZ): *Mental distance aptitude*, expressed in race distance. The amount of time/distance a horse is able to efficiently operate from a mental standpoint.

Pattern Of Motion (POM): A naturally occurring or learned response to the stimulus of a horse race. A pattern of motion develops every time a horse engages in a workout or a race.

Controlled Response: a controlled reaction to stimulus, equating to *controlled* movement.

Reactionary Response: a frantic response to stimulus equating to *uncontrolled*, inefficient movement.

Sensory Lead Change: The act and ability of identifying stimulus within each sensory field (eyes, ears, feel) and efficiently sharing that information between the senses.

Sensory Lead Change *Efficient Transition*: The ability to continue with a focused physical movement without compromising efficient movement, while identifying *and* properly interpreting stimuli that are being processed by various senses: eyes, ears, rear feel.

Sensory Lead Change *Sticky Transition*: An inability to properly and efficiently transfer stimuli from one sensory avenue to another with efficient interpretation; thus disrupting efficiency of physical motion.

Primary Sensory Interpretation: This indicates what sensory avenue that is used as the *default* interpretation avenue; eye, ear, feel etc., which one of the senses is relied on the most for interpretation of environmental stimulus. Horses have natural inclinations from a sensory basis.

Sensory Dependency: The use of one sensory avenue over another to interpret stimulus even when such stimuli could be more efficiently processed by another sensory avenue. This *dependency* often precipitates *reactionary* and *sticky transitions* and inefficient physical motion.

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Purposeful Motion: Efficient, willful movement, including reactions and non-reactions to stimuli, based on proper interpretations by the sensory system. High-level herd dynamic horses move with purpose in response to situational chaos, never losing control of their reactions to the environmental stimuli of herd motion and chaos. Thus, physical speed and movement is purposely controlled to fit the circumstance, as a naturally occurring act of self-preservation.

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