

‘The Canadian’ Triple Challenge

Training Level Challenge

Liberty Module

Philosophy

The CRTWH recognizes that there is more to horsemanship or horse ownership than riding a horse. Changes in the world of horses and changes in the demographics of those owning horses dictates that the ways of interacting with horses must also change over time.

The quote attributed to Winston Churchill, “there is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man” is still true today and can be applied to different ways of being with horses. There has been a change in the way people interact with horses, a change in the people who own horses, and an expansion of the reasons that people own horses.

The CRTWH Training Levels include disciplines that recognize the relationship between horse and human that do not necessarily involve riding or driving – The Training Levels recognize the place the horse can play in enhancing personal development through the alternative activity of liberty.

The purpose of the Training Levels is to evaluate your progress with your horse in the discipline of your choosing. Liberty is no different. This module evaluates your progress with your horse. It is the human’s responsibility to be informed about liberty training. As with other disciplines, there are many practitioners, methods and approaches to both groundwork and liberty. The human is responsible for ensuring adequate knowledge and ability to work with their horse at liberty. Safety of the horse and human is of the utmost importance.

The basic premise of Liberty is that in the relationship between horse and human, the horse is always treated with dignity and respect. The work on or off line is not intended to show dominance by man or the superiority of man to horse, but a respectful partnership between the horse and the human working together to achieve a goal. The safety of both horse and human is always a prime consideration.

The following elements will be used in evaluation. Overall body language is paramount in all elements.

- a. Relationship between horse and human – trusting, respectful, connected, confident, willing partnership
- b. Rapport – communication, willingness, working together, partnership
- c. Respect – mutual between horse and human, space boundaries established
- d. Overall expression – focused, connected, engaged as opposed to bored, unresponsive, aggressive.

- e. Exuberance – enjoyment, joie de vivre on part of horse and human. (minimal exuberance at level 1, moderate at level 2 and high at level 3)
- f. Technical - the correctness of the technique but overall body language was exaggerated or weak (technical failure)
- g. Technique - appropriate for the task
- h. Drive – response to pressure and body language.
- i. Draw – connection of horse to human
- j. Impulsion – balance and forward movement
- k. Fluidity –moving as a team without hesitation

General Rules

Safety of horse and human is paramount.

Personal space is of utmost importance for safety. At no time should the horse invade your space. Keep a 'bubble' of personal space around you at all times. This personal space bubble is part of your liberty training protocol.

Pre-requisites

- the right attitude.
- study of liberty methods and practitioners
- a fitness level that makes you a good liberty partner for your horse.

Tack and Attire

- Guiding tool – four foot stick or other with rope attached
- Helmet - recommended
- Flack Jacket – recommended
- Gloves - recommended
- Boots or other safe footwear

Working Area

Small enclosed space - paddock, pasture or 20 meter round pen

Offline - a big enough space that offers the horse the choice of staying or leaving

Communication: Verbal and/or Body

- Verbal cues are acceptable. Clicker training is discouraged
- The goal is more body language and less verbal cues

- Be present and be in the moment at all times.
- Treats may be used at the discretion of the handler

Level 2 – Foundations of Liberty

- **Enclosed area.**
- **The horse is not haltered.**
- **Handler must have a training aid.**
- **Treats may be used at the discretion of the handler.**
- **Verbal cues are acceptable.**
- **Clicker training is discouraged.**

| Requirement | What will be Evaluated | Comments |
|--|---|----------|
| <p>1. Approach the horse and show that the horse is a willing partner.</p> | <p>The horse should show engagement with the human and not be looking</p> | |
| <p>Rub your hands all over the horse's body in a amiable manner.</p> | <p>away as if rewarded for looking away and not being with the human.</p> | |
| <p>Rub the training aid all over the body of the horses – legs, neck, tail, hindquarters, forequarters showing that the horse is amiable and has no apprehension of the training aid.</p> | <p>Show the rapport you have already established with your liberty partner.</p> <p>Response should be friendly, accepting, trusting and non-aggressive on either the human or horse's part.</p> | |
| <p>2. Trust Demo</p> | <p>Show the rapport you have already established with your liberty partner.</p> | |
| <p>Show that your horse exhibits extreme trust in your partnership by slapping the rope end of your training aid on the ground while walking around your horses with your hand on the horse.</p> | <p>Response should be friendly, accepting, trusting and non-aggressive.</p> | |
| <p>3. Direct Pressure</p> | <p>The horse gives to pressure softly and willingly.</p> | |
| <p>Ask your horse to lower his head with gentle pressure on the poll while offline.</p> | | |
| <p>Demonstrate that your horse will</p> | | |

lead forward willingly with you hands on neck, mane or jaw. Ask your horse to lower his head using hand pressure gently on his poll allowing the horse to respond softly and willingly without resistance.

Change direction and repeat the exercise.

5. Drive the Front Quarters (softly with rhythmic pressure)

Ask the horse to yield his front quarters. Both directions for about 90 degrees, 180 degrees, 360 degrees for a full circle.

Hind legs move a minimal amount. Ideally the horse pivots on the inside hind foot.

Repeat in the opposite direction.

6. Drive the Hind Quarters (softly with rhythmic pressure))

Ask the horse to yield his hind quarters. Both directions for about 90 degrees, 180 degrees and 360 degrees for a full circle. Front legs move a minimal amount. Ideally the horse pivots on the inside front hoof.

Repeat in the opposite direction.

8. Follow Me

Stand beside the horse so the horse is beside your shoulder.

Ask the horse to move forward demonstrating that he is soft and willing to follow at your shoulder and in synchronization.

Attitude

Rhythm

Relaxation

Precision

Technique

Fluidity

Respect

Attitude

Rhythm

Relaxation of horse

Relaxation of handler

Precision

Technique

Fluidity

Respect

Rapport

Trust

Respect

Synchronization

Relaxation

Change speed and demonstrate the horse is willing to change speed along with your change of speed while remaining in synchronization at your shoulder.

Change direction demonstrating the horse will willingly change direction when you change direction while remaining in synchronization and at your shoulder.

Do a 180 degree change in direction and demonstrate the horse will change directions willingly and follow you while remaining in synchronization and at your shoulder.

Halt and demonstrate the horse will halt when you halt and remain at your shoulder.

Back up 5 feet to demonstrate the horse is willing to back up and remain in synchronization and at your shoulder. when you back up.

9. Circling Offline

Do not drive the horse around with a training aid as in lunging or round penning. Trust the horse will circle around you while you remain relaxed.

Ask the horse to go around you on a circle at a normal lunging distance.

It is preferable you stand still as the horse circles around you, but it is permissible for you to make a small circle yourself.

Ask for three circles.

Demonstrate the horse will stop on command in front of you and disengage and turn and face you.

Ask for three circles in the opposite direction.

Repeat in the opposite direction. Show that the horse will stop circling, disengage and face you when you use your body language to accomplish this when the horse circles in front of you while you are standing still.

10. Jump an obstacle

Respect

Stand about 6 feet away from an obstacle (log, barrel, cavletti or jump standard)

Willingness

Responsiveness

Ask the horse to jump over the obstacle.

Relationship

The horse should disengage after jumping the obstacle, turn and you.

Repeat in the opposite direction.

11. Move Sideways

The handler should stand at one end of the pole or log and send the horse sideways.

The horse should straddle the obstacle (log or pole)

Demonstrate the horse can move sideways willingly to the left while disengaging and crossing his hind legs while straddling the pole.

Repeat moving sideways in the opposite direction.

Level 1 Groundwork and Preparation

- All online groundwork in preparation for Level 2

Level 2 – Foundations of Liberty

- Lead line and halter off for most exercises.
- In a safe fenced space.
- Possible work with obstacles, in particular the figure eight around two barrels first while on line and then offline.

Level 3

- Higher level liberty
- Performance in front of an audience of at least ten people.