

FEELING AND LOOKING

The requests are determined by what we “feel” and by what we “see”, therefore by our sensitivity and by how we look.

It is the rider who has to independently give a priority to these skills. The Instructor can correct and advise, but over the learning curve, the pupil should be put in a position to independently make a decision.

It is commonly believed that sensitivity cannot be taught. Instead it is commonly agreed that it is possible to improve in which direction and how the rider looks.

It is also true that, in most cases, the rider does not lack sensitivity. But rather his attention is evidently directed towards something else that is unfortunately considered to be more important. Or, very often, the inertia of his action has already started and not been adequately eliminated. Hence the rider can no longer “feel” what he should “feel”.

“.. I have already understood. Now you will see that if I do this, I will be able to make my horse...”

- “...turn sooner. “ Or
- “...avoid shying or refusing”. Or
- “...have a smoother pace without rushing into fences” Or
- “...solve its problems on ?” Etc..

The more it is difficult to do something, the higher the number of alternative solutions proposed and arrogantly suggested. Becoming an Instructor is apparently the dream of all the people who ride.

“Have you seen?” is a frequently asked question whenever the horse starts responding even though the response is not acceptable on a scale from 1 to 5 or from 1 to 10. This rider is triggering a chain of actions that should be avoided.

In addition to this, the rider becomes so engrossed in this approach that he can no longer control the quality and the efficacy of his aids. In fact, he is concentrated on the unpleasant but justified reactions of his horse that starts defending itself.

Very soon, the rider’s predetermined work plan turns into a series of actions to correct of the reactions that he has provoked: a vicious circle!

For rather presumptuous riders, doing nothing and getting ready to “feel” is very difficult – and who is not at least a little bit presumptuous in this sport?

They are anyway eager to “do” something. They are convinced to be hyper-“sensitive” and to have already understood.

Correcting a “technical” defect is much simpler than correcting this attitude that is so typical in the field of equestrian disciplines. It is amazing to see how fast young people learn, not only in the field of equitation.

All the Instructors have experienced that it is much easier and less time-consuming to bring beginners to a competitive level rather than improving a young rider who had the time and the bad luck of developing this negative attitude.

It is necessary to start from scratch and first to “feel” what the horse wants to communicate.

It is of paramount importance for riders to have understood their horse’s language and to mainly focus on the effectiveness and the quality of their aids and the use of their eyes. Any rider, whatever his level, can indefinitely improve these skills. It is therefore a must for riders to concentrate on what THEY can do best and only later on what the horse can.

Both talented and less talented riders (Who is able to judge?) should put themselves in a condition of “feeling”.

It is clear that we are all “sensitive”, no one is “insensitive”!

How many people are there with some impairment of touch?

It is easy to meet many people with some disorders of the other four senses – sight, hearing, smell and even taste.

Think of those who are deprived of their wallet by pickpockets on a bus.

Evidently they do not realize when they are being robbed. They are not “insensitive”, but they are unable to “feel” the light and experienced touch of the pickpocket because of the crowd, of the people getting on and off, pushing, tilting and so on and so forth.

The same thing happens to the rider who does not adopt an attitude of “feeling”.

A light, fine, delicate touch can be easily perceived in a situation of suppleness, while it is difficult to feel it during a wrestling match or when we are all engrossed in controlling a difficult action and its inertia.

In addition to feeling, riders should learn how to look. It is not so much the level and quality of their eyesight that is relevant, but rather how they use their eyes.