

The Passenger Lesson Part 3

By Dolores Arste, 2004

Unless it's an emergency, just as you are about to bend to a stop, sit and stop riding for a count of 1001 - 1004. If he stops before 1004, C/T he has just begun to "read" your body language. Now you can begin to refine the bends.

Be sure when you sit to resist the urge to pick up the reins. Just sit. Allow your horse those few seconds to read you and your intent to stop.

There are a couple of notes I'd like to add to the previous posts before going on; --When you slide one hand down the rein to being the one-rein stop, leave the other hand in the middle or at the buckle and resist the urge to take the slack out of both reins. Be sure the buckle hand leaves slack in the outside rein.

--Be sure when you sit to resist the urge to pick up the reins. Just sit. Allow your horse those few seconds to read you and your intent to stop.

Now, as you begin to slide down the rein you will ask for "gives". Early on you may find yourself dragging the head around to get the feet stopped. If the horse is very forward, you may indeed have to do this for a while.

However, soon you will want to ask for the "give" with more finesse. How much finesse depends entirely on your confidence level. If all is relaxed and you've gotten so you don't have the bending hand stationed over the rein ready to slide, then you can slow down the request to "give" into John Lyons Good, Better, Best, Yield the hip.

For those not familiar with this, it means to slide down the rein and ask for a softening of the jaw, slide again and ask for a deeper softening, slide again and ask for deeper still, then slide down and look back over your shoulder at the hip spot. By this time you will be stopped.

You will at this point be connecting the rein to the hip. When this becomes good and you and your horse are completely comfortable, you are ready to move past the passenger lesson. As soon as you begin to direct the

dance beyond go and stop, you have left the passenger lesson and are ready to move on.

The key to the passenger lesson is to “let go”, give up control of the direction but not the speed.