

connection

self-evaluation

Knowing where you are gives you a good baseline and starting place. It is also motivating as you have a clear goal and can keep track of progress. This is especially helpful if you're struggling at some point, as we all do when it comes to training horses and reaching our goals!

Even more importantly, this is a way to take control of your own improvement. You can progressively advance and enhance the quality of your training from a zero to a three, from a three to a five, from a five to a seven, and even have some eight to tens along the way!

Get in the habit of scoring yourself and your horse. It's what great horsemen, trainers and riders do naturally.

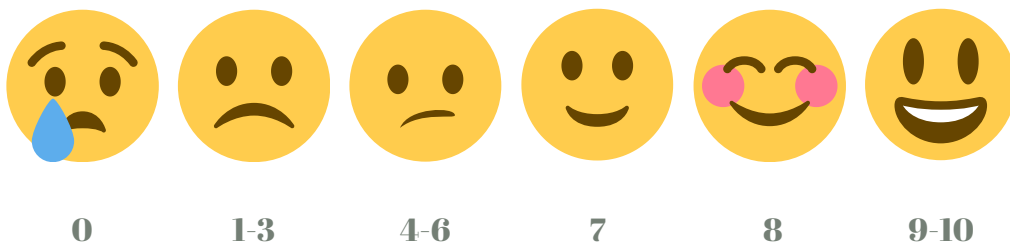
How to Score

In many competitions the scores are well defined, but it often does not apply to every day riding, training and the harmony you experience between you and your horse. Here are the important factors to keep track of as you train your way into a happy relationship with a happy horse... mentally, emotionally and physically.

In the chart to follow you'll be invited to score yourself and your horse on some important elements. On the left side you'll see the higher scores and ideal goals. On the right side you will see the lower scores and problems you might be experiencing.

Take a few minutes to focus on this and write down your scores, together with a date. Depending on how rapidly you progress, you might want to retake the evaluation again in 3 – 6 months.

How to know your score? Your facial expression and feeling will help you know!



connection

(relationship, bond, unity)

DATE _____

Goals 7 - 10	Score <i>Write your score between 1 - 10</i>	Reality 0-6
Your horse is more drawn to you than other horses or the barn.		Your horse is herd bound, "buddy-sour" 'nappy' or "barn-sour"
Your horse is connected to you when you handle him/her on the ground.		Your horse looks away from you and more toward other horses or where he would rather be.
You are mentally connected to your horse, 100% present and aware.		You are not all that mentally connected, not present – thinking about problems, what you need to do, what time it is, impressing others, getting a good score in a competition, etc.
You put effort into staying mentally connected and keeping your horse mentally connected no matter what else you are doing.		You make getting the task or test more important, even if it means your horse loses confidence or trust.
You know how to get and maintain connection.		You don't know how to do that – unless you have treats!
You make the relationship with your horse #1, do what it takes to maintain his confidence, trust and respect (high opinion).		You don't care... or you want to but don't know how. Your horse doesn't want a relationship with you, prefers his herd or barn.

empathy

(kindness, awareness, compassion)

DATE _____

Goals 7 - 10	Score <i>Write your score between 1 - 10</i>	Reality 0-6
You understand the prey-predator dynamic: horses as prey animals, and the human as predator.		Think horses are just horses, unaware of the prey animal nature.
See things from the horse's point of view.		Don't really know what's important to horses or why they behave negatively.
Consider how you contributed to the situation (<i>The horse was fine until we showed up!</i>)		Tend to blame the horse.
Redirect rather than punish. Allow the horse to correct itself (hold the position, the boundary, etc.)		Scold, smack, correct or punish the horse.
Stay calm and focused.		React, get emotional (scared, frustrated or mad).
Patient		Impatient
Teach the horse.		Force the horse, micromanage and get him do it, even if you do it 'softly' but keep urging and pushing. Horse doesn't get to think or make the decision.

Good leader, earns respect - horse has a high opinion of you.		Autocratic, demanding... or too empathetic and do more of what the horse wants. You are not really the leader. Either way, horse does not have a high opinion of you.
Teach good manners, required behavior (not that, this!)		Tolerate or punish unwanted or bad behavior rather than fixing it.
Kindhearted		Cold or cruel
Effective		Ineffective
Put effort into continuously improving your knowledge and skills to be the best leader for your horse possible.		Feel guilty that you don't ride or play with your horse enough; aren't a good enough leader/rider, don't advance or continue your learning, etc.
Practical, fair, act like a horse: When in horseville, you do as horses do!		Too empathetic, afraid you will damage the relationship. Think and act like a human instead of a horse.
You match the horse's energy, which builds rapport.		You have more - or less - energy than the horse, which is disturbing and breaks rapport.
Sensitive to the size of the horse's personal space or "bubble."		No awareness of the horse's bubble. Barge into their personal space, unaware of horse's subtle or demonstrative signs of disturbance.

NOTE: Remember that 'empathy' means training to empower the horse as your willing and happy partner. It does not mean you do whatever the horse wants... you still have to be the leader. This is about listening and negotiating for leadership rather than forcing or demanding it. The first 3 modules work together as your basis, the core of everything. It's where you start, and where you go back to check the important components and then progress with your training goals.