

Introduction to *Pocket Guides 2-3*

*Learner Preparation*

Lesson 5:

The Language of *The Seven Games*  
The Communication Game

Lesson 6:

Haltering with Savvy and Game 1  
-*The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup>

Practice tying the halter knot  
Start playing *The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup>

Lesson 7:

Beginning Leadership.  
Teaching your horse Games 2, 3 and 4  
Game 2 - *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup>



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# POCKET GUIDE 2

PARTNERSHIP  
*Level*



*Pocket Guide 2*  
*Level 1 Ground Skills*  
*Lessons 5-7*

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## Introduction

The *Seven Games* are the games horses play with each other to establish a pecking order or social order within the herd. Through these games they determine who is the dominant horse. This is often known as "alpha" which means "number 1," the boss hoss.

When you start to play these *Seven Games* with your horse, the objective is to earn the alpha position. You will gain your horse's trust and respect, take away fear, and build a LANGUAGE so you can clearly communicate your wishes.

This LANGUAGE gets more and more sophisticated as you progress to higher levels in the Parelli Program. But it all begins here in the lessons of *Pocket Guide 2*. It's like an alphabet that builds to words, then sentences, then paragraphs, then stories. In *Level 1* you'll be learning the alphabet and simple sentences.

When you have completed lessons 5-7 you will be NEARLY HALFWAY COMPLETE with your *Level 1 Program*. Yes, we know there are seven *Pocket Guides*. But the most challenging part of this course is when you have to learn something brand new and then TEACH it to your horse! This is a big task in an education program, but it really is possible.

## Learner preparation

You are about to start learning the first four of Pat Parelli's *Seven Games* and teach them to your horse.

The *Seven Games* form the foundation of a language you will use to communicate with your horse both on the ground and in the saddle. This foundation teaches you the language and psychology that horses use when interacting with each other. When in Horseville, do as horses do!

Your learning process begins by introducing you to the games in a clever and fun way. Then you will begin to use this new language and explore its influence with your horse.

That is also when the technical details of the games will be brought into play. The aim is to have every interaction with your horse be a good interaction.

The aim of the following lessons is to accelerate your learning process and avoid the common pitfalls. Here we teach you how to naturally communicate with your horse in real life situations like:

- stopping him from crowding you;
- getting him to lead without running over you;
- how to get firmer without being perceived as aggressive.



The detailed techniques for each game will be progressively taught to you for the purpose of improving your communication.

### *Reading assignment*

Before you start *Lesson 5*, read the chapters titled, "Become a Horseman" and "Exploding the Myths" in your *Theory Guide*. The steps you have taken to reach this stage in the Program tells us that you are ready to think about yourself and your responsibilities to your horse in a new way.

### *Listening assignment*

In your *Level 1* pack you will find an audio CD titled "The Six Keys of Success" by Pat Parelli. Please listen to that CD before you complete the next three lessons.

Plug it in to your car CD, or listen to it while you are cooking... or put it in your Walkman as you muck out the stalls.... However it works best for you, make sure you listen to it.

Sometimes we think that unless we are getting step-by-step instruction it can't be that important. But underlying it all is a deep understanding of the philosophy. The more you understand the philosophy, the less, in time, you will need step-by-step instruction. It's part of becoming

independently savvy. If, for any reason, it is difficult for you to listen to the CD you can read the chapter "The Six Keys of Success" in your *Theory Guide*.

## *Lesson 5: The language of the Seven Games*

### *Learning foundations of a new language*

#### *Introduction*

The best way to teach you the principles of language with horses without spending many hours observing their behavior is to have you experience it as a simulation.

Without this you would need a master horseman to make sense out of what you were seeing. For many years this is how students learned under the watchful eye of Pat Parelli and his instructors.

That was until the clever creation of *The Communication Game*. Students now learn the principles by being the participants or by watching participants play the game.

Get ready to look at things from your horse's point of view and learn the value of simulations in learning how to effectively influence your horse.

## The Communication Game

Get ready for a fun adventure in learning.

### Viewing assignment

Play DVD-2, Chapter 2, and watch the segment with Linda titled "The Communication Game."

You would do well to watch this segment twice! Watch it once all the way through in a relaxed manner absorbing the experience as it unfolds.

Then, watch it a second time, studying it more closely. You might even wish to take a few notes on the observations you feel are important to you.

Everything you need to do with this information is written in this *Pocket Guide* lesson, but it in no way captures the richness of what you are about to see.

*When you are done viewing this Chapter, return here.*

As you will have seen on the DVD, *The Communication Game* and the simulations set the stage for learning. They establish the principles behind the *Seven Games* and many other principles related to the nature of horses and our interaction with them. Understanding these ideas BEFORE

playing the *Seven Games* will accelerate your results and make for much deeper learning. The techniques will then add refinement.

If this does not yet make sense, it will after you've spent some time thinking about these principles. The next step is getting with your horse.

Here in a snapshot are some of the key principles brought out on the DVD segment:

- How important it is to create a language your horse understands, before you actually try to communicate what you want;
- The importance of playing the *The Friendly Game* FIRST, because successful communication needs a foundation based on TRUST;
- The method of "approach and retreat" is the key to giving a horse time to become comfortable with something he is afraid of.

We would expect that after watching the DVD the principles made some sort of sense to you. You will have a new idea about communication with horses in general even if you lack confidence about being able to do this with your own horse today.

In this lesson you are going to explore the new principles you have learned about the importance of body language

for communication. Just kind of play around and see what you can get when asking a friend to move around.

Doing the following lesson will make a big difference to the quality of your first experience with your horse.

### Objective

- ★ To advance your learning by asking a friend to play *The Communication Game* with you for personal feedback. The feedback from a partner acting like a horse will help you be more skilled when you first start communicating with your horse.

### Tools

- ✋ Empty soda bottle with cap on so it makes a hollow noise when using it!

### Directions

Ask a friend to assist you by playing *The Communication Game*. This will help you assess what you know about communication with a horse before you actually begin to ask your horse to move around (with your natural horseman tools of course, not a soda bottle!).

Think about what you want to achieve BEFORE you start. Set a list of tasks that you will get your friend to do without them knowing... and keep them simple. Set tasks like going under/around things, stepping up/over things, etc. Actually, it almost doesn't matter what the task is as long as it's simple and you know what it is and they don't!



You will be creating a good learning opportunity for yourself and a memorable experience for your friend! Be prepared for some easy successes and others that are hard fought for – don't quit once you start. Do whatever you have to do to get the result.

The MAIN thing you will experience from playing this game is how important *developing a language* is if you want to communicate successfully.

### Success Map

Place a check on your *Success Map* to indicate you are beginning to understand how important developing a language is before trying to communicate with horses.



## Lesson 6: Haltering with savvy and Game 1 - The Friendly Game#1

Before starting *The Friendly Game*#1 lessons, it is important that you learn the savvy way to halter a horse.

### *The Horseman's Halter and 12-foot Line*

When playing with a horse, it's very important to have a rope that will slide through your hands easily so you can allow the horse to drift. It is also important to have a rope that conveys life and energy so you can communicate clearly through it.

An ordinary lead rope does not do this. It's more like a 'limp cotton noodle' as it is meant only to lead horses and tie them up, nothing more, nothing less. Our *12-foot Line* is made from half-inch, high quality yachting braid that is smooth, flexible, and resistant to salt and water combinations like sweat. It has a sturdy swivel snap that prevents the rope from twisting and forms a critical part of the hinge system you will learn about in *Lesson 7*.

The style of halter is also critical. If you use the kind that is made with thick, flat leather, or webbed nylon, you will encourage the horse to push and lean against it. These halters are clumsy and have no balance point or feel, again not ideal for delivering any kind of communication. They

are uncomfortable for the horse all the time, whether he's yielding to you or not.

The Parelli *Horseman's Halter* is hand tied. The knots are balanced in strategic places and the loop for attaching lines hangs below the jaw and acts as a hinge. It is made of a high quality, soft yachting braid that is not too thin and not too thick. It is light and comfortable for the horse, yet uncomfortable when he is putting pressure against it, offering instant comfort and release as he responds.

The more savvy you have, the more particular you become about the quality and accuracy of your tools.

All the steps you need to tie the halter knot and use the *12-foot Line* effectively are written here in this lesson. However, some of you will benefit from seeing this before you try to do it from written lessons.

### *Viewing assignment*

Play DVD-2, Chapter 3, and watch the segment with Linda titled "*Haltering with Savvy*."

You may want to have your *Horseman's Halter* with you so you can practice tying the knot.

*When you are done viewing this Chapter, return here.*

## Practice tying the Halter knot

The style of knot you will learn and use sits comfortably flat and will not loosen when your horse moves. It will not tighten and get stuck should any undue pressure be exerted on it. This knot does not bite down on itself so it can always be manually loosened.

### Objective

★ To tie the correct halter knot quickly and easily.

### Tools

🖐️ Halter, 12-foot Line, a fence or sturdy chair.

### Directions

Find a fence or sturdy chair to practice tying your halter to (examples here are shown with horse).

Practice tying the halter knot.

- a) Pull the loose end toward you through the eye of the halter loop.



- b) Pass it to the right, behind the halter loop and then back through the hole in the fold you have created between the halter loop and the loose end itself.



- c) Pull the loose end to the right to secure the knot.





## Start playing *The Friendly Game*#1!

*The Friendly Game*#1 is the most important game because it creates trust and friendship with horses – that's why it is the first game of the seven.

### Introduction

You should not start telling a horse what to do until you have proven to him that you are friendly and you have earned his confidence. Your earlier lessons (spending time with your horse and introducing him to the tools) have already begun this process. Now you are ready to expand the game to a higher level of skill and acceptance by your horse.



### TAKE THE TIME IT TAKES SO IT TAKES LESS TIME.

Even if this is all you have time for in this first session, invest it in proving to your horse that you are trustworthy and have only friendly intentions.

### *How long should you play *The Friendly Game*#1 on the ground with your horse?*

You should play with your horse until he is using his 'left' brain, which means he is calm, thinking and responsive.

There is very little or no *Opposition Reflex* (fearful reactions) and he is not afraid or overreacting.

For some horses, this may take just a few minutes of repeating the game. For others that are more difficult, hypersensitive, very afraid or skeptical, it can take as long as an hour! Think of it this way: it won't take longer than two days! That way, if it takes 20, 30, 60 minutes, it will feel like nothing compared to two days.

If you take the time it takes it will take less time. Most people keep having the same problem over and over, year after year... which adds up to a lot more than two days. If you don't take the time to do this now you'll have to do it over and over and over because you won't have done it right in the first place.

If you stop while your horse is still feeling unsure or upset, he will be worse the next time, so be passively persistent in the proper position until you get your horse to respond without fear. Make sure you know the signs of when your horse is calm, left brain and more accepting:

1. He'll be able to stand still.
2. He'll be able to look at you instead of away, toward the barn or his friends.
3. His head will be lowered and his eyes blinking rather than staring.

4. He may even lick his lips now and then.

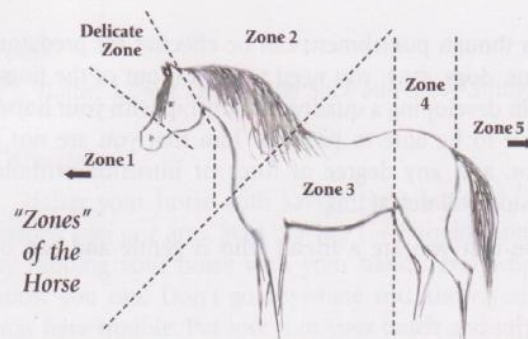
Also, if you are having trouble with one aspect of the game, and you are running out of time, simply go back to the previous level of the game you were having success with and finish on a good note. (Don't believe that old tale of never letting the horse win. To "win" is not prey animal logic. They are only interested in survival.)

### *Help your horse to accept your touch everywhere – in every zone*

Are there any spots you know your horse is defensive about and won't let you touch, or that he gets a bit aggressive about? If so, approach these LAST; you may even have to wait until a later session. You have to gain more trust and relaxation before going there.

Many horses seem okay as long as you just sneak around them and don't make sudden movements. *The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup> will help your horse learn to be calm about every kind of approach... you'll even be able to run up to him once you've gone through all the things we're going to teach you.

A horse that is "gentle" is one that trustingly allows himself to be touched all over, even under the tail, flanks and in the mouth. This is accepted without tail swishing, tensing, or flattening of the ears, and is an indication of how



well he trusts and accepts the human in his personal space.

Many people punish horses for trying to nip or kick when they touch these areas, but most negative or defensive reactions indicate a degree of distrust, dislike, or even fear.

Once you understand that he's not just being crabby, that from the horse's point of view he feels violated, threatened or scared because he hasn't given you permission, you'll know that punishment is inappropriate.

Punishment is a concept that does not work for prey animals; they don't understand it and it's very intimidating. It makes the situation worse because now they really don't like you and don't trust you!

Going into a horse's personal space without asking permission first can often cause them to retaliate by kicking, biting or charging.



Even though punishment can be effective for predators (humans, dogs, etc.), you need to keep it out of the horse corral. In developing a quality relationship with your horse, you have to be able to prove to him that you are not a predator, and any degree of force or intrusion without permission will defeat this.

Prove that you are a friend who is gentle and can be trusted!

### Objectives

- ★ To gain your horse's confidence, acceptance and understanding.
- ★ To prove that you are not as bad as you smell! (Even though you smell like a predator, you won't act like one... which means get impatient, frustrated, aggressive or forceful!).
- ★ Reinforcement: *The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup> will reassure a horse whenever he gets confused, or it will help him know when he is right when you're playing with him.
- ★ To erase any negative or defensive feelings when playing the other games, should the horse get scared or offended.
- ★ To teach the horse to "rub-to-a-stop." This will be very valuable throughout your horsemanship experiences. A simple rub will quiet him right down.

### Tools



Halter, 12-foot Line, Carrot Stick and Savvy String.

### Directions

Halter your horse with savvy! Have your 12-foot Line draped over one arm. Start playing *The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup> first by rubbing your horse with your hands, everywhere you know you can. Don't go anywhere you know your horse may have trouble. Put love into your touch and rub with a slow, massaging rhythm rather than a quick or light touch. Use the three R's: *Rhythm, Relaxation, Retreat*. Use patience and the *approach and retreat technique* to achieve this.

Next, introduce the *Carrot Stick*. Instead of picking it up and approaching your horse, pick it up and walk away from your horse. Face your horse and walk backwards, with your 12-foot Line in one hand and your stick in your other hand held out to your side. Don't hold any closer than half way down the line because you'll need room to move and drift. Gradually put the stick out in front of you as you continue to walk backwards and allow him to sniff it. Make sure he gets to approach it rather than you poking it towards him or stopping so he gets closer. Keep your pace at the same rhythm.

Once he accepts the stick in *Zone 1* (his nose and mouth area), it's best if he sniffs and touches it, keep walking



backwards until it is level with *Zone 2* (his neck) and you can actually rub him. Once you can do this, stop walking backwards but keep rubbing.

Take your time to rub him all over *Zone 2* and then gradually progress to *Zone 3* (his back and belly including the forelegs), then *Zone 4* (his rump including the hind legs), then *Zone 5*, stroking his tail, and finally back to *Zone 1*, gently stroking his nose. *Zone 5* and *Zone 1* are often the most defended places on a horse.

Use lateral thinking if you get to a spot your horse won't let you touch, like his ear or under his flank or down his hind leg. This means you find other ways to get to what you want rather than going directly to it.

Instead of trying to touch "that spot," get increasingly closer but retreat just before breaking the tolerance threshold, yet keep the same rhythm and don't lose motion.

*The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup> is a process of de-sensitization. It won't take long before your horse allows you to rub him everywhere if you've been polite and used approach and retreat to give him time to get more confident.

See if you can find his itchy spots! This is a great way to have a horse feel like you really know him. Learn to read his body language... his head will cock to the side, his lip stretch forward, he may even try to scratch you back, just like horses

do with each other! (Be careful of this, he could accidentally nip you. Just get out of his reach and don't make him feel wrong for it.)

By rubbing your horse with the *Carrot Stick* you will start to desensitize him much quicker and keep yourself at a safe distance should he react defensively in a particular spot.

### Success Tips

- ✓ Don't hold your horse tightly. Give him at least half of the lead rope, lots of slack.
- ✓ Think about how your horse would rate the quality of your touch. Do you think he would find it smooth, comforting and pleasurable or too light, too harsh, too rough, too ticklish, too "grabby," too jerky?
- ✓ Remember how sensitive a horse is. He will judge you by your approach and your touch. Try to touch your horse like a mare touches her foal, with feel and sensitivity and love. Touch your horse with your heart, put your heart in your hand.
- ✓ Ask "permission." Anyone can *make* a horse submit to being touched through force or by restricting his movement. But this would be very unfair. Ask permission by being friendly, soft and smiling, using approach and retreat until the horse allows you to touch him.

- ✓ Don't restrict his movement. Allow him to drift backwards or sideways, just don't let him run over you (remember your Blocks). When he drifts, you drift too but at a slower rate. Most importantly try to keep the motion going in your hand or *Carrot Stick*, even if it is not touching him. Only stop the motion when your horse stands still; this will let him know that standing still is what you want him to do. If you stop while he is still moving, he'll think he trained you to stop when he gets antsy.
- ✓ Try not to get frustrated; just be friendly and patient and passively persist until he relaxes and allows it. Be there for your horse through this period of trust building.
- ✓ Be conscious of how you first enter your horse's personal space. Approach a little off to the side, smiling and more slowly the closer you get. Stretch out your hand and let him sniff it before you get close. This will show him that you respect his personal space, and that you are asking permission to enter into it. This is the considerate part of the relationship.

### Pitfalls

- ☹️ *Not asking for permission*, just expecting him to put up with whatever you do.

- ☹️ *Not allowing your horse to drift and move his feet* if he's worried.
- ☹️ *Stopping while your horse is still having trouble.* You need to stay with it until he realizes he's okay and gets calm.
- ☹️ *Holding your horse close and tight* rather than giving him a slack rope (approx. half of your 12-foot Line).
- ☹️ *Getting mad or frustrated.* If your emotions come up, your horse will be convinced you are a predator with bad intentions. If you are unable to maintain your calm patience at this stage, it's better to stop and walk away than to keep trying. It will not work if you are frustrated or angry in any way... this will not be perceived as friendly!

The more you know, the more you understand about *why* horses get defensive, the more you will understand and not blame the horse, and the more patience you will develop.

### Troubleshooting

- ☹️ *Your horse refuses to let you touch him at all with the Carrot Stick!*
- 😊 Use your *Carrot Stick* and rub only the 12-foot Line with rhythm until your horse relaxes. Work your way up the rope until you can rub his cheek or the side of his neck.



Allow him to move around if he needs to while you are rubbing but don't let his head turn away... keep the rope loose and rhythmically "bump" his nose back toward you if he tries to turn away. A bump means a series of short sideways tugs on the line that starts off lightly and gets progressively stronger until he looks at you. When he stops, you stop. Allow him time to lick his lips and then start from the beginning again. A bump is better than a pull because the horse can't lean on it or pull against you.

Approach and retreat from there until he can accept the rubbing with confidence. Be prepared to *take the time it takes* because this will help everything else go quicker.

☹️ *Your horse tries to bite or kick when you want to touch certain places.*

😊 Use your *Carrot Stick* as an extension of your arm so you can stay at a safe distance. Stand near his neck and close to his shoulder. Don't try to prevent the reaction and especially don't make the horse feel wrong for defending himself. A horse is most concerned about places vulnerable to predators such as inside his mouth, under the tail, around the ears, below the knees, under the belly and flanks, behind the hamstrings of his hind legs, and below the hocks.

Be passively persistent, use approach and retreat to

build confidence, and keep the motion and rhythm going to help desensitize your horse. Allow him to kick and bite at the *Carrot Stick* as much as he likes, he can't hurt it. Keep calm and keep smiling until he no longer feels threatened. As soon as he stops the behavior, you should stop and relax. Allow him time to lick his lips, then start again from an accepted spot and work towards and away from the defensive spot.

You'll be surprised at how quickly most horses will get past this defensiveness if you can stay calm, friendly and non-blaming.

Also, it would be great if you could take the time to solve this in one session, but if it's too much for you or you run out of time, simply go back to a place that your horse accepts, wait until he is calm and then you can stop for the day.

*Remember:* you are touching his personal spots, most of which are the most vulnerable to a mortal wound from a predator. You have to prove beyond any shadow of a doubt that you are not going to touch those spots for that purpose!

You may even decide it's a bit much for you to handle.


If you have a horse who is extreme in his reactions, seek help from a qualified, endorsed Parelli Instructor\* (in a lesson or workshop), or simply leave this until later.



As your horse's trust and respect for you builds, you'll find his defenses will begin to drop.

\*Savvy Club members can also access the Virtual Instructor Q&A database at [www.parellisavvyclub.com](http://www.parellisavvyclub.com).

### Safety note

 When dealing with a kicking reaction, keep the horse's head drawn slightly toward you with a shorter line; this way he cannot turn his hindquarters into you. When dealing with a biting reaction, keep your body out of range by not allowing your horse into your personal space (using the Blocks) until the behavior is no longer evident. Also, remember you can use the *Carrot Stick* as an extension of your arm so you can stay out of range!

### Lesson 6 Check List

- You know how to halter your horse with savvy and tie the halter knot correctly.
- You can rub your horse smoothly all over his body (with the *Carrot Stick* or your hands) and he is calm and accepting. Maybe he even enjoys it!
- You know exactly where your horse's favorite itchy spot(s) is!

### Success Map

Place a check mark on your *Success Map* for Lesson 6.

## Lesson 7: Beginning Leadership. Teaching your horse Games 2, 3 & 4

### Introduction

This is a big lesson, the biggest in the Program. If you've been following the Program without skipping steps, spending undemanding time with your horse in his yard or paddock, introducing him to your tools, and playing *The Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup>, then you can confidently move into this lesson.

For some of you this is where you will really make your first significant steps of teaching your horse.

You will find it easier than you imagine because of what you have already learned about developing a language through *The Communication Game*.

At the end of this lesson you will know the names of Games 2, 3 and 4 and know technically how to play them in different zones on your horse.

Remember, your horse is already an expert at playing the *Seven Games* so he's looking for how good you are. At first you may feel a bit clumsy and even unsuccessful here and there but don't worry, it's part of the learning process. Take the feedback from your horse and try again.

Once you have read the directions for each game and had an experience of it with your horse you will then play ALL four of the games you have learned every time you are with your horse until they can be done to a standard we will specify clearly for you in this lesson.

You are ready!

### Preparation for playing Games 2, 3 and 4 Reading Assignment

Read the chapter titled, "The Seven Games" in your *Theory Guide* as preparation for these lessons. You will gain a great understanding for what you are about to learn in this lesson.

Learn each of the games in the order presented. Each time you move on to a new game be certain to use the previous one(s) in your warm ups.

### Viewing Assignment

Play DVD-2, Chapter 4 and watch the segment with Linda titled "Simulations for Games 2, 3, and 4." You'll then see Pat teaching these games to a new horse, followed by Linda and Stephanie discussing "The importance of patience and persistence."

When you are done viewing this Chapter, return here.

## Game 2 - The Porcupine Game#2

The Porcupine Game teaches your horse to yield away from the feel of STEADY pressure.

You can use it to move him out of your personal space, to move him into a position to saddle or bridle him, to lower his head, to pick up his feet... and it also prepares him for leg and rein aids in the future.

We call it the Porcupine Game#2 to make you think of sharp objects one would rather not lean on!

The Porcupine Game#2 is a close contact game, therefore you should use only steady pressure. Using a poking motion can irritate your horse and cause him to react negatively.

Horses want to be comfortable, so when they learn that they can achieve comfort by moving away from the pressure, they'll be happy to continue doing so. For this to work, you have to learn to **quit the pressure the moment he moves away from it** so he gets a "release," which tells him "well done, you did the right thing!"

It's important to use *The Friendly Game*#1 in the form of a 'rub' before and after you apply the *Porcupine Game*#2 pressure. A friendly rub before will prepare your horse to be touched in this way. A friendly rub after will let him know he was right and "soothe or erase" the pressure point.



Using this 'Rub-Press-Rub' technique will prevent your horse from becoming defensive (see above).

Before beginning with the *Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup>, get to know the *Four Phases of Friendly Firmness*. This will teach you how to have hands that close slowly and release quickly.

### *The Four Phases of Friendly Firmness*

Have you ever seen an alpha horse move another horse away by just giving him an evil eye? This is the horse's equivalent of *Phase 1*!! *Phase 2* is when the ears go back or the tail swishes... *Phase 3* is moving toward the other horse to bite or kick... *Phase 4* is delivering the bite or kick!

Horses understand the *Four Phases*. They use them all the time on each other. Alpha horses are masters at using them, and it's how they earn the respect of the herd.

Throughout this program you will learn how to use phases so you can be the alpha horse, and ultimately a great leader for your horse.

The *Four Phases* you will learn for playing *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup> are:

*Phase 1* – press the hair;

*Phase 2* – press the skin;

*Phase 3* – press the muscle;

*Phase 4* – press the bone.

Don't underestimate how light *Phase 1* needs to be and how firm *Phase 4* can be. (Most people make the mistake of starting too suddenly at *Phase 2* or *3* and never get to *Phase 4* – this teaches your horse to become dull.) By using *Phases* effectively, your horse will learn to respond at *Phase 1*.


### *Objectives*

- ★ To teach your horse to yield from the feel of steady pressure in different zones of his body. In *Level 1* this will be in *Zone 1*, *Zone 2*, *Zone 3* and *Zone 4* only.
- ★ To teach your horse to follow a feel. When you lead him forward or turn his head with the halter or lead rope, he needs to respond to the physical feel or pressure and move his feet in response.
- ★ To have hands that close slowly and open quickly. This brings the feel on slowly and politely and releases quickly once the horse responds.



★ To be able to *progressively* apply the *Four Phases of Friendly Firmness* and recognize when to release as the horse responds.

## Tools

 Carrot Stick, Halter and 12-foot Line.

## Directions

In this lesson you will be teaching your horse to yield from the feel of steady pressure applied with the *Carrot Stick* to his *chest, front end and hindquarters, and with your fingertips on Zone 1 to move him backwards*. If you focus on the part of the body you want your horse to move, you'll know just where to put the *Carrot Stick*... you'll put it in the center of his chest to push him backwards, in the groove behind his jaw where it connects with his neck to push his front end around, and just below the point of his hip bone (behind his flank) to move the hindquarter.

You only need to ask for just a step or two at first while your horse is learning this game with you. When he begins to understand what you are asking and responds with more confidence, you can build up to more and more steps.

It's important to note that *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup> is typically the weakest or most avoided game for most Parelli

students! It is the most difficult game to play with the horse because of their natural tendency to push into pressure and the horse is usually an expert at it himself... pushing and kicking and biting at other horses all day long!

Don't overdo it in your first session, but do make sure that every time you play with your horse you play a little of *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup> so you can keep improving it.

### Step 1. Yielding from the chest.

Ask your horse to move backwards in response to applying steady pressure with the *Carrot Stick* to his chest.



Remember to rub his chest with the *Carrot Stick* first, then start at *Phase 1* (press the hair), and progressively increase the phases (allow about three seconds between each phase). Watch your horse's expression as you do this. At ANY point that he leans or steps backwards release the pressure immediately, no matter what phase you are applying, and rub with the *Carrot Stick*.

Releasing at the right time will cause your horse to think that he's training *you*! He'll think, "If I just move backwards I can teach my human to stop doing that."

Throughout these *Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup> lessons, if you have gone through all the phases, and your horse simply will not

yield, or is having difficulty, you will need to refer to the troubleshooting section that follows these lessons.

If your horse is beginning to understand that pressure on his chest means move backwards, in other words, he will take one or two steps backwards, then you can move to *Step 2*, yielding the front end.

### *Step 2. Yielding the front end.*

Ask your horse to move his front end around by applying steady pressure with the *Carrot Stick* to the groove behind his jaw where it connects with his neck.



Always remember to 'rub-press-rub' to help your horse to not become defensive. Apply the phases slowly, starting at *Phase 1*, and quit immediately the moment he starts moving his front end in the direction you are asking.

In your first session, all you are looking for is that your horse understands that pressure on his body means to yield away from you. Just a step or two in the right direction is all you're looking for at this early stage.

By the end of the *Level 1 Program*, you will be able to yield his front end in a full circle. But this can only happen if you build it slowly, one step at a time, rewarding the slightest try from your horse.

### *Step 3. Yielding the hindquarters.*

Ask your horse to move his hindquarters around by applying steady pressure with the *Carrot Stick* to just below the point of his hip bone (behind his flank).



We cannot remind you enough to 'rub-press-rub' when you play *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup>! Apply the phases slowly, starting at *Phase 1*, and quit immediately the moment he starts moving his hindquarters in the direction you are asking.

By the end of *Level 1* you will be able to move his hindquarters around in a full circle. But as with the other yields in this lesson, your horse will become more confident in this game if you build up to this slowly, one step at a time.

*Step 4. Try yielding the chest, front end and hindquarters with your fingertips.*

Once your horse is responding nicely to the *Carrot Stick*, you can use your fingertips and try all the same yields.





*Step 5. Yielding backwards from Zone 1.*

Ask your horse to move backwards from *Zone 1* (the bridge of his nose) with your fingertips. Remember to use the 'rub-press-rub' technique, start at *Phase 1*, and release when he tries. Once your horse understands what this pressure on *Zone 1* means, you can start to ask for more and more steps in succession before you release.



*Step 6. Yielding backwards and forwards from the lead rope.*

Hold the snap of the lead rope and ask your horse to step backwards, then to come forwards according to the direction of the feel coming from your hand.

In this task he'll feel the pressure from the halter, rather than the stick or your fingers. When you slowly push the snap towards your horse's chest, he'll begin to feel the pressure from the halter on his nose which tells him to move backwards. When you slowly pull the snap towards you he'll begin to feel the pressure from the halter on his poll which tells him to yield forwards.

The phases for this are: *Phase 1* - the halter presses the hair; *Phase 2* - the halter presses the skin; *Phase 3* - the halter presses the muscle; *Phase 4* - the halter presses the bone.

*Success tips*

- ✓ *Concentration, steady pressure, release.* Get a concentrated or firm look on your face so your intention is clear that you want your horse to move away from the pressure.
- ✓ *Be as dependable as a fence post.* This means you hold firm until the horse yields away. It's just like if your horse would lean against a cactus or a nail head (or a porcupine quill!). The more he pushes against it, the harder it presses into him. But when he backs off, the cactus doesn't follow him, it stays just where it was. If you can be as immovable as a fence post your horse will learn the principle of moving away from discomfort to find comfort through his own action. He is also instantly rewarded by his action by the release of pressure.
- ✓ *Rub-Press-Rub* – rub before you start applying pressure and rub after you release the pressure.
- ✓ Use the *Four Phases of Friendly Firmness*. Remember to press the hair, then the skin, then the muscle, then the bone... and to release instantly when you feel a response. Allow three seconds between each "phase," holding it then increasing it as necessary.





- ✓ Horses love comfort. The better you get at releasing when the horse responds as you want, the quicker they will tune in to you and begin to respond to the lightest feel at *Phase 1*.

### Pitfalls

- ✿ *Jabbing or using a poking stimulus* instead of a steadily increasing pressure.
- ✿ *Pressing too hard, too fast.* Use the phases *religiously*, apply the pressure slowly and fairly. Again, think of holding each phase for three seconds before progressing to the next phase.
- ✿ *Forgetting to rub your horse before and after the pressure.*
- ✿ *Not planning the move before asking for it.* Decide *how, where to, and how far* you want your horse to move before you start. The clearer your plan the clearer your communication will become for your horse.
- ✿ *Being out of position.* Be in the *right place* to cause your horse to move in the *right direction*. Think of it like moving a dance partner: *Zone 1* for backwards; *Zone 2* for forequarters; *Zone 3* or *4* for hindquarters. You could even think about moving a couch, where would you apply pressure in order to move it to the places you want. There is no mysterious spot to touch, it's

just the ones that make sense.

- ✿ *Your horse escapes your touch.* This is actually a fearful response. (Refer to *Troubleshooting*.)
- ✿ *Not releasing quickly enough.* If you continue pressing after your horse has done what you wanted you'll cause him to become dull and unresponsive or to keep going and be confused. When you quit the pressure is when your horse knows he's done what you wanted. The faster you can let him know, the more responsive he'll become.

### Troubleshooting

- ☹ *Your horse won't let you use any pressure and tries to escape from it.*
- ☺ Your horse should stay with (not escape from) your pressure and stop when you rub those same spots. If he escapes from it you need to slow things down, ask for a step at a time, and use more *Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup>, *more rubbing*. By allowing him to escape and not getting the game right you will have a horse that is afraid of pressure from your hand, and ultimately from your leg, the bit and the rein.

☹️ *Your horse throws his head in the air or plunges it to the ground to try to escape from your hand when you're trying to press on Zone 1.*

😊 Try to keep your hand in contact with your horse's nose but without grabbing it more strongly or this will cause him to react more violently. Think of it as if your hand is stuck to his nose with glue; it just stays there but doesn't resist or fall away. You'll need to be pretty athletic, bending your knees quickly to get down to the ground, or stretching up on tiptoe as he lifts his nose into the air. As soon as he stops still, remove your hand, then start again. Every time he goes still, remove your hand and this will teach him that this is where comfort is. Pretty soon, you can recommence *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup>. If he's a very tall horse, you may need to also use the *Halter and 12-foot Line* as an extension of your hand at first. Find success this way, then move on to using just your hand.

*Remember:* the more often your horse can escape from your touch, the more he'll do it as a pattern.

☹️ *Your horse tries to kick or bite when the pressure gets stronger.*

😊 When a horse doesn't want to yield he may become defensive and worried, or he'll try to move you away by playing *his* version of *The Porcupine Game*<sup>#2</sup> back on you!

Be passively persistent in the proper position and allow him to bite or kick at the *Carrot Stick* while you stay calm and out of the way. Use your phases politely but firmly and make sure you release as soon as he tries. When your horse is having *opposition reflex*, *slow down and get clearer*; be careful not to get in a hurry it only makes things worse. With this slower and clearer approach, it won't take long before he starts to respond. Also, using the *Carrot Stick* means you are out of range and don't have to get tense or defensive yourself.

*Remember:* if he is inclined to kick, you need to keep his head tipped toward you with the lead rope a little shorter than usual (still with some slack in it, not taut). And keep that *Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup> active. The more difficult the horse, the more *Friendly Game*<sup>#1</sup> you need to play to balance things out and keep his opinion of you positive.

☹️ *Your horse just won't move!*

😊 Hold your ground. When you have reached *Phase 4* it should be enough to cause some discomfort which may be evident by your horse twitching his skin or swishing his tail (or even more extreme reactions such as trying to bite or kick). Do not increase your pressure beyond this, just be passively persistent in the proper position and wait. As soon as you feel any attempt at a response –

even just a weight shift – release, rub, and start again. Sometimes this will feel like an eternity when in reality it's probably only been thirty seconds!

Horses know that people often give up too quickly. Take the perspective that *it's not going to take longer than two days!* This will make two minutes feel very short, and even better – the next time will take half as long, and from there, less and less each time.

For a very dull horse, use something with more insistence than your fingers such as a stick, a dull-roweled spur held in your hand, etc. But only use it for *Phase 4*. (You don't want to use a sharp spur, rowels or wheels prevent spurs from digging in because they roll over the skin instead.)

As soon as your horse realizes how he can gain his own comfort, he will start to respond to just your fingers.

Add some tapping: This is one more strategy to get your horse unstuck. Maintain the pressure with your fingers and then start tapping rhythmically with your *Carrot Stick*, lightly at first and slowly increasing the taps. Where to tap? Right near where you are pushing on your horse, except his nose in which case you would tap him on the chest.

### Check List for the Porcupine Game#2

Your horse yields confidently with steady pressure from the *Carrot Stick* or from your fingertips in *Zones 1, 2 and 4*:

- It takes only *Phase 1* or *2* to yield your horse backward from his chest or from *Zone 1* (the bridge of his nose).
- It takes only *Phase 1* or *2* to yield the front end successfully.
- It takes only *Phase 1* or *2* to yield the back end successfully.

### Success Map

Place a check mark on your *Success Map* indicating that you have completed *The Porcupine Game#2* section of *Lesson 7*.

*Then you can get Pocket Guide 3 to begin your lessons on The Driving Game#3... See you there!*