Frank Bell
Horse Whisperer

Colt Nibbling & Biting

Hello,

I am not sure if you answer questions or not, but I was wondering maybe you could help me with a colt? Our horse had a colt about a year ago, she recently had another baby, and he was suckling on her. We took him into the barn, and let him out most of the day, but we have a lot of problems getting him back into the barn, he'll run on the rope, jump up, and drag the person. We're starting to get him used to a saddle, and a bridle, and he seems to be doing fine. But he has a nibbling/biting problem. How do I fix this problem? I would really appreciate your help. Thank you.

Roseanne:
He clearly doesn't want to be in the barn and prefers outside. A couple of ideas. When he balks, back him up aggressively using the lead just under the chin. Back him about 10 steps while making a shhhhhhhhhhhhhh loud annoying noise. Then let it sink in for a half minute and begin again. If he does it again, you do that routine again until he gets it. Accurate timing is critical to your success, so you have to be prepared and react to his attitude immediately. He'll find it isn't working to resist. If he rears up, snap the lead under his chin again while making the shhhhhhhhhhh noise. You make the right thing comfortable, a lot of soothing words and stroking, and the wrong thing difficult or uncomfortable. If your timing is good, before long he'll want to cooperate. It would be best if you used a rope halter with a 12' lead and NO SNAP. You can't get much done with a 6' lead. We sell a variety of these custom 12' halter/lead combos on the web and they make your job infinitely easier . . . But consider his wishes as well. Far too many horses are cooped up in small stalls/cells. It's no way to live. Horses need to be horses and live out and have room to unwind and kick up, especially young ones.

As far as biting, with the back of your open hand bop him under the chin when he begins to nibble and again make that shhhhhhhhh noise. If he doesn't get it, increase the slap. If it's serious, really give it to him, again under the chin. Never hit a horse in the face. Before long when he hears the shhhhhhhhhh noise he'll understand it means, 'Stop doing what you are doing.' It's amazingly effective. Remember, the nibble will become a bite. It's just a matter of time. Most horses and especially young horses need a job. Most handlers don't ask much except simply leading. My program uses that energy constructively while promoting you and your horse's safety. Using my 7 Steps, when it's time to ride the horse there will be a solid foundation and a horse that enjoys work and respects the handler. Additionally I've produced a 'Working With Young Horses' video for situations just like yours. I strongly encourage you to peruse my site. Your life and your horse's will be a whole lot easier with clear, concise communication.

Good Luck and Safe Riding,

Frank R. Bell

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