



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

Is Aggression in Horses Curable?

I have a three year old paint mare. I purchased her at one year old. She has always laid her ears back if approached while eating. I thought I had her cured of this and other aggressive behavior. I was wrong. While doing some ground training, backing to be exact, she lunged at me, knocking me down. She has been aggressive towards others also. I started being strict with her and it seemed to help, letting her know that this was not acceptable. She goes along fine for a while and then out of the blue she will get aggressive. What can be done about this? She is nice to ride, has never bucked and is pretty responsive in the saddle. But I always carry a whip while around her. Any suggestions? Is this curable?

This is very fixable. If your child was suddenly aggressive toward you, wouldn't you turn the tables and become more aggressive right back? Well that is exactly what I do with these kinds of horses. That behavior needs to "hit the brick wall" very abruptly. I begin with a shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh noise that gets progressively louder, then follow up with physical. It might be a squirt gun in the face, or a plastic bag waved aggressively at the horse, or a handful of dirt, but I find a way to have the horse experience an uncomfortable stimuli. The moment the behavior ends I quit all sound and agitation and I allow it to sink in. I then show the horse the exact opposite side which I call *bonding*, the first step in my 7 Step System of exercises. That puts the horse and rider on much higher ground prior to the ride and takes about 80-90% of the risk out of the ride. This is all described in my foundation video, "Discover the Horse You Never Knew." My philosophy is that there is a loving 'white zone' and a not so nice 'black zone'. When the timing is right horses figure it right out. I would plan on fixing such a behavior in a couple of minutes because I understand and have perfected the 3 T's - *theory*, *technique*, and *timing*, which allows me to be effective in my communication. Take some time to read about my approach by reading the three Western Horseman articles.

Good luck and safe riding,

Frank R. Bell