Welcome back to the next episode of The Principles of Training. Today we’re going to talk about the principle that I call "Don’t go to bed angry."

So, the principle of Don’t go to bed angry, to do with horse training, has to do with the fact that if your horse starts to get uptight at any point during the training that you empty that uptightness back out. You get rid of that tension, you get rid of that worry and you get your horse back to relaxed before you go further ahead. Now the human version of Don’t go to bed angry, I’m sure if you’re married you at your wedding you had an older, wiser family or friend offer you some advice. They go now, "Let me tell you sonny, just one thing you need to know about being married, don't go to bed angry" and what that really means is if there is any tension built up between the two of you during the day, sit down and talk about it, discuss it, get it out in the open and get rid of it. Put it to bed. Get rid of that tension there and then you go to bed, and you wake up the next morning everybody's happy - we're not bringing yesterday's arguments into today's because we've resolved them. That’s just another bit of marital advice people get given too is don't bring up old arguments, but it's very easy to bring up old arguments if you didn't put them to bed in the first place.

So, I'll give you a good example with horses before I get going here. Recently I was in England doing some clinics and a girl said to me "My horse is stupid" and I said, "Really why?" and she said, "Well the other day I went for a ride." I call it a ride, she calls it hacking out. "I was hacking out and a rabbit ran out of the grass and it didn't really bother my horse, he kind of just looked at it but it didn't really bother him. Then he went along a bit further and another rabbit ran out of the grass and he looked at it didn't really bother him. Then a bit further another rabbit ran out of the grass and it didn't really bother him and we'd been riding for an hour or so and there must have been twelve different rabbits coming out of the bushes. He kind of just looked at them but didn't really do anything silly and then the thirteenth rabbit ran out of the bushes and when it did he freaked out, spun around and bucked me off. Like, he'd seen twelve rabbits that day. What was the problem? He must be just stupid."

And I said, “No he's not stupid. What would have happened was the first rabbit scared him a little bit and he held on to that bit of worry. And as he went along a bit further another rabbit scared him a bit and he held on to that worry and he didn't let back down. The third rabbit and the fourth rabbit and this horse's capacity must be twelve rabbits of worry and once you get over that the horse overflowed and off he went.

There's a trainer from Arizona, Harry Whitney, and he talks about your horses worry cup. He says your horse can handle a cup full of worry. You know your worry cup is this big and he says your job is to have your horses worry cup as empty as possible. So, when he says your horse can handle a cup full of worry he means your horse can contain a cup full of worry. He can hold it in, but once your horse’s worry cup overflows, it means more worry than he can hold in and that's when you get a buck, a rear, a bolt, a spook or whatever. Your job is to keep your horse’s worry cup as empty as possible. I guarantee you this horse’s worry cup is this big and it went along and saw one rabbit and then it was here, and he saw two rabbits it was here. And so, with three rabbits it was here in four and five and six and seven eight nine ten and then we get to twelve rabbits and that horse can control itself but one more rabbit is going to send it over the edge and that one more rabbit jumped out and the horse spooked ran off and now the girl thinks the horse is an idiot.
So how do you go about getting rid of all your rabbits in the training your horses? Well, the big thing for me, it all starts with the groundwork. When I'm doing the groundwork, you know you're doing either one of two things - you're either desensitizing your horse or sensitizing your horse. You're teaching the horse things they need to respond to and you are teaching them the things they need to not respond to.

And how you go about that is the same way we deal with anxiety in humans. My wife has anxiety and she has panic attacks. I'm sure it's very common these days. I'm sure everybody knows someone who has anxiety or has panic attacks or both. When we first got married I was not aware that my wife had panic attacks or that she had anxiety really. We'd only been married several months, and she woke me up in the middle the night and she kind of pointed to her chest and she's like “I need to go to the hospital now!” I said “Why? You have pain? Are you hurting?” She said “No” and I said “Well, you're not hurting” She said, “No I guess not, but I need to get to the hospital now!” And I said, “What's wrong?” She said, “I just need to go to the hospital now!” I said, “You’re not hurting, you’re not bleeding.” “No, I need to get to the hospital.” I wasn't sure what was going on, so I took her to hospital and the doctor looked her over and he was thinking maybe it was a chest thing too and so he took her pulse and a blood pressure and an EKG and all that sort of stuff and in the end, he looked at her and he said, “There's absolutely nothing wrong with you.” And she kind of turned to look at me and she said, “I think I'm going to die.”

You know when you're having a panic attack you're pretty sure that you're going to die. It's hard to come back down from that and so for a long time, the last twenty something years, my wife has suffered from these things and she's never really had an answer for it. And then at the beginning of last year she looked up online she found a webinar or something on exercises to help herself deal with her panic attacks. She found a Cognitive Behavior Therapy Technique and what she's supposed to do was one day when she was completely relaxed, she is supposed to sit down, and she's supposed to think about something that makes her a little bit upset. A tiny little bit worried. She's got this little dog that she just loves and I'm sure she'd probably sit down and think about him being sick. So, she starts out completely relaxed and she thinks about something that gets a little bit upset and as soon as she gets herself a little bit upset, then what she's supposed to do is she's supposed to focus on her breathing. Breathe in for four, out for seven. Breathe in for four, out for seven. Mentally focus on those numbers or mentally focus on deep breathing the energy into your abdomen all that sort of thing - that mental focus until she's completely relaxed again. Once she gets completely relaxed again what she's been supposed to do is she's supposed to think about something that gets her a bit bothered again and when she gets a bit bothered then she's got to focus on her breathing and get back down. Initially when she did that it would take time for her to get down from being a little bit up because she's not used to it. But after a while, the whole thing is, you're supposed to be able to get yourself a little bit bothered and then come straight back down and it gets easier. And then what you do is you get yourself a bit more bothered, you think about something even worse, and then focus getting back down from that. Basically it's the same thing we do with the horses. You know, your desensitizing gets them relaxed and your sensitizing gets them responsive. But every time you get them responsive, they will get a little bit anxious and so what you do along the way is as soon as they get a bit responsive and get a bit anxious you relax them and get them back down again. You get them chilled out. Get them to be not bothered by whatever it was you just did and what happens after a while is that you can get them more responsive and then come down quicker. It's like really trying to reset their thermostat.
So, when my wife told me about that, I started telling that story about the Cognitive Behavior Therapy at clinics trying to tell people it's exactly the same thing, you expose these horses to a little bit of bother and make sure they can come back down from that little bit of bother. Hopefully at some point in time they can come back down from a lot of bother. So, I didn't mention before but my wife has always had a problem flying. She's not a very happy flyer, but one thing she's never had, she's never had a panic attack on a plane. Can you imagine if you're scared of flying and you have a panic attack on a plane? You're stuck in this steel box thirty thousand feet above the ground with no control over it. You're probably going to have a bit of a freak out. So luckily it had never happened. So, I started telling the story at those clinics and I'd come home and I'd say, “So how's your cognitive behavior therapy going honey?” She would say, “Well I haven't really practiced it yet”.

So, then I tell the story about the Cognitive Behavior Therapy at the clinics again in relation to horses and I'd come home and say, “Hey babe, how is your cognitive behavior therapy?” and she would say “I haven't really done it yet.” And I said, “Well you're not really going to get anything done with it if you don't practice it, you know?” So last year we were in Canada traveling and we flew from one place in Canada to another place, it was about a two-and-a-half-hour flight. I fly a lot, so I fall asleep before the plane takes off and I wake up as the plane bounces to a stop. Well she doesn't. So, we take this flight and when the plane landed I woke up and I looked at her and she looked kind of pale. I said, “Are you okay?” She said, “Well I am now.” I asked what happened and she said that she had a panic attack. Then I was thinking does my face have some scratches on it because she should have gone crazy, but she looked fine. You know the flight attendants hadn't put a strait jacket on her anything, so I was like “So what did you do?” And she said “Well, I've actually been practicing that cognitive behavior therapy just a little bit and so what happened was when I started to get the panic attack, I focused on my breathing and I got myself back down out of it.”

And that right there is the whole basis of all this training of horses is if you think about that situation right there. My wife had never had a panic attack on a plane. She'd never had a plane to practice getting down from a panic attack. All she'd been doing was getting herself up a little bit and getting herself down a little bit. And then getting that bit good and getting herself up and down more until you can have big things happen and you can come back down quite easily.

Recently we had a clinic here and there was a 17.2 hand some sort of warmblood horse that was really worried about a lot of stuff and one of the things it was really worried about was me just throwing a rope or anything like that over the horse's back. That took quite a while to get that horse good with that and once it got good with it could come back down from that it didn't take all that long before I could actually take a whip and crack it here and get closer and closer to that horse with the noise and everything, but it was easy for the horse to overcome that. But what was hard was the first bit because when it got a little bit uptight it stayed uptight and didn’t have a way to come back down. Basically, what we did some Cognitive Behavior Therapy with that horse and got it to where it could reset itself quite easily. FOOTAGE OF GREY HORSE AT CLINIC.

So, the real benefit out of all of this stuff is teaching the horses how to control their emotions. In people, there is IQ and EQ. IQ is intelligence quotient; how smart you are. EQ is emotional intelligence, how well you can control your emotions. That is what we are trying to do with these horses is teaching them to control their emotions.
The same thing applies teaching these young reining horses to spin. This is a “greenish” sort of a horse named Bundy, he’s my horse. You can see he is a little bit sweaty, I’ve been out here working on the spin. But you might notice that even though he is sweaty, he is not all uptight, he is pretty relaxed. That just comes back to learning how to bring themselves back down all the way along. I don’t really have to do much to him to get him back down. I’ve been working on the spin right here, just working on speeding it up just a little bit, he’s still very green, but he goes around here. I might bump him with my foot a little bit, get a little more speed, adjust something here, adjust something there. When I get done, he should just – see the little blink right there – he should just be able to come back down. He’s not very far along in the spin yet, but even when I add that bit of pressure, as soon as I get done with that spin, we walk off and he’s just chilled. That is just something they learn all the way along. When you are teaching these young horses to spin, it’s almost like the mental ups and downs and the physical things go all at the same time. When you first teach them to spin, you might teach them to take one step. So how up do they get doing that? They don’t get very up at all. Then when they can do one, you can teach them to do two. Then you can teach them to do three. Let’s say that teaching him three steps got him a little uptight, his worry cup got just a little bit worried. Well, after you do three steps, you sit here and let him come back down. It’s just like Robyn with her cognitive behavior therapy, when she is learning to do it, she doesn’t get herself too far up before she gets herself back down. She doesn’t go to bed angry. You come back and get yourself grounded.

There are a lot of ways to teach the spin, but every single one of them probably has releases of pressure. Whether you teach them to spin from a standstill like this – they take a step, you let go. Not that taking a step will get them uptight, but say that it did, you let go, rub and they are back down again. There is that way to teach them to spin. A lot of guys teach them to spin by just taking forward motion and redirecting it into a smaller, and smaller, and smaller, and smaller circle until that forward motion becomes a lateral motion and then they come back out into the forward motion. When they come back out here, this is the letdown thing, this is the come back to relaxed, chilled out sort of thing. And then they will do it again, take the forward motion and redirect it, make that circle smaller, smaller, smaller and then they step laterally and then you can come back out of it. There is a lot of up and down, it’s not just spin spin spin spin spin. In the training of reining horses there is always that mental up and mental down.

It’s not just with the reining horses either. It is with every discipline. Right now, the queen of the dressage world is Charlotte Dujardin from England. I met her a couple years ago. 4 years ago, she won the gold medal at the Olympics, the next year she won the world championships and the next year she won the World Equestrian Games, and then just this year she won the gold again at the Olympics. Her trainer and coach and mentor is a guy named Carl Hester. He half owns the horse Vallegro that Charlotte competed on and won all those gold metals on. Carl Hester does some clinics, and someone went to a clinic and took notes and then posted them on the internet. Half way down one side of the page of notes, one of the things that Carl said was that “your horse needs to be responsive. He needs to canter off of your outside leg alone.” Meaning your canter shouldn’t be – put your outside leg on, inside leg on, 3 seat humps, a hail Mary, and god save the queen. They need to canter and canter now – they need to be responsive! But half way down the other side of the page it said, “If your horse starts to get hot doing any gait or doing any movement, you need to return to the walk and walk on a loose rein until he is relaxed before trying it again.” Doesn’t that sound like my wife’s cognitive behavior therapy? When she gets herself uptight, she needs to get herself relaxed. And then what does she have to do? She has
to try it again. And that is how you build that horse’s worry cup up. Like in reference to the spin, that his how you can get them to spin really fast and then stop and relax because it is cognitive behavior therapy for horses.

Hopefully this video has shown you how the principle of Don’t go to bed angry works and how all good horse trainers tend to know that if your horse gets mentally up, you should them back down. And really good horse trainers know that you should practice that mental transition a lot as a part of your training. So, what we will do next time in the Principles of Training is we will look at Don’t Go To Bed Angry again but we will take a deeper dive and I will show you more examples both on the ground and under saddle with an array of different horses. So, join us next time on the Principles of Training.
G’day, I'm Warwick Schiller and welcome back to the principles of training. Today we're going to take another look at the last principle we looked at which is called, ‘Don't Go to Bed Angry’.

In the last episode we looked at the principle of Don't Go to Bed Angry and how important it is in training horses. As I mentioned in that one you know, that everybody already knows they get told by an older and wiser person, ‘don't go to bed angry’ and what they really mean is if any tension builds up between the two of you during the day get rid of it- sit down, talk it out, make it go away because if you don't let it build up, you can't bring it up at other times and your small arguments don't turn into big ones. It's exactly the same training horses. For many years I’ve trained reining horses and then toward the end of it, I started getting a lot of problem horses in to solve the problems you know, to retrain them; bucking, bolting, rearing, all those sorts of things with all different breeds of horses- warm-bloods, I had some dressage horses, I had eventers, I had Andalusians, Arabians, Thoroughbreds and all different kinds of breeds. Probably the most common problem I had was they had no reset button, they had no emotional intelligence, they had no way to control their emotions. They let things build up inside and they'd be anxious when you got them out and then you put the saddle on they get more anxious and then someone gets on to ride and they get more anxious. Then pretty soon something happens and they’re bucking and bolting. And so when I was problem solving those sorts of horses I always go back to the beginning- the same as if they had no problems and now being started in the first place. I start doing groundwork and as I talked about last time, there's two parts to that groundwork, you're either sensitizing them or desensitizing them. Sensitizing them is asking them to do something then they're responsive. Desensitizing them is making sure that the thing you just got them responsive to is not bothering them and that's a huge part of getting them back down.

A favorite quote of mine from Nuno Olivera is, ‘Your horse needs to be relaxed yet remain powerful’. That is a very very difficult thing to do- get a horse that is powerful and ready to do things yet be relaxed, waiting for it. That's really hard to do. I think there's a whole lot of don't go to bed angry involved in that because every time you get a horse responsive or powerful as Nuno Olivera likes to call it, once you get them responsive and have them engaged and propulsion and forward, you will tend to get a bit of worry. So, all the way along now we're trying to teach those horses how to come back down from that worry. So, when I'm doing groundwork with a horse, you know, anytime I'm asking them to do something like sensitizing, so I would ask Bundy here, if I asked you to go off to my left you might notice when I go like that, Bundy doesn't go, he's not moving when I do that because that's not part of the cue. He's still relaxed. But if that lead rope was attached to my hand and I did that, he would go. So, he's relaxed yet responsive. So how you go about asking for things has a lot to do with that. In another episode we'll talk about the application of your aids in the order of your cues. I'm not going to really get into that right now. So, you're trying to get those horses to where they're responsive and relaxed at the same time. In all of the sensitizing like I said, it gets them responsive but it's the desensitizing them-having them come back down after you do something, that gets them relaxed again. And like I said last time, it's just a balancing act- going from one to the other trying to get that happening.

Something I suggest you guys do is any time you use a tool to get your horse responsive, you want to make sure that your horse is not worried about that tool afterwards. So, if I was to use this flag to back up my ask and this flag, it might look strange to some of you but it's basically a floppy dressage whip, that's it, it's an artificial aid. It's something you use to back up your ask. So, if I ask Bundy to go and he
doesn't go, I'll wave this until he goes and when he goes then I'll stop asking. This is the same as a dressage whip. You never ever use your dressage whip to get your horse to go without applying your subtle cue before that, either subtle leg aid or whatever it is you choose to do. But the rule of the dressage whip is you can never use it on its own. Another rule of the dressage whip is your horse shouldn't be bothered by it, so Bundy shouldn't be bothered by this flag even though if I ask him to go and he doesn't go to my standards, I can use that flag and get a lot of energy out of him. But when I ask him to stop again and I take this flag and I wave it around he's not concerned about it. Because Bundy's got quite a background in 'don't go to bed angry', I've spent a lot of time working on that and a lot of the horses that I saw that were worried about things, that carried with them a lot of baggage, you know what they're worried about the wind blows they get scared of it. A car backfires they get scared of it, all those sorts of things. Those horses are just carrying around a lot of worry and it doesn't take much to get them to 13 rabbits like I talked about last time.

And you know, like I said one of the rules with all of your tools- it doesn't matter what tool you use- if you use a lunging whip to get your horse to go you have to make sure that the lunging whip itself does not bother your horse. You're not trying to get them dead either, you want to get to whatever tool you use, you need to be able to use it when you need to. Get those horses to really understand what that tool means and that it's not a random act. It doesn't just jump out of nowhere and get them, but it is an ask and then is a follow-up. The horse doesn't get worried about it, but if you just use this on its own then anything that looks like whip, sounds like whip, seems like a whip whooshing around - that sounds a bit like the wind in the trees doesn't it? Any of those things will add to your horse's anxiety.

A friend of mine who's a very good horse trainer once said that horses feel anxiety when they feel like they have no control over what happens to them. So, it's very, very important that the horse knows how to control the dressage whip, the horse knows how to control the lunging whip, and the horse knows how to control the flag. Bundy knows how to control this flag. If I ask him to go and I do that he will go faster and even he knows how to make the flag go away. If I asked again and he didn't go fast, I could wave the flag and it'd give him more energy and he make the flag go away by getting more energy. But he knows how to control the flag, so the flag does not bother him at all. I've had a lot of horses in the past, like I said, I had horses that buck, rear, bolt, spook in the wind, all those sorts of things and those horses, anything resembling, like I said the wind, a car backfiring, whatever would set them off and so teaching them how to not be worried about these tools is one of the things that teaches them how to come back to down, how to not go to bed angry.

There's something you have to be very careful though, doing all this stuff with horses. Certain types of horses, basically ones that are quite sensitive but quite stoic, you might say, can learn how to hide that from you. It's what we call 'shut down'. If you've ever seen a mouse being chased by a cat and the cat chases the mouse and the mouse runs but then the cat catches the mouse. Then the cat starts to play with it and after all that, the cat can let the mouse go and the mouse just sits like, 'I'm good, I'm good, I'm good'. But the thing is, the mouse is not good. You look at the mouse and you go 'Why don't you run little mouse, run!' The mouse is not good, the mouse is actually what we call 'shut down', the mouse has said 'I'm not here this is not happening, la la la la la la la'. So, he still up, he's not down, he's not in a relaxed state, he's in a worried state but his mind has gone elsewhere. You have to be careful with some of these horses that they don't do that, what we call, shut down thing. So if you have a worried horse and you desensitize him a lot and they just learn to standstill while you desensitize them to things but they are not really, but they don't really get relaxed about it, they appear to be relaxed they're
standing still but they're mentally running away - those ones can be dangerous because you think, 'oh my horse is good with this stuff, I just desensitized it'. Then you can be out hacking out somewhere and something happens and the horse, it's something big enough that the horse cannot ignore it, and it goes 'la la la la la la' and it's right there and those horses really have no practice coming down from being up because when they went into that that shutdown mode they look like they've come down, but they haven't.

And so, something you can do with those horses is... Bundy's asleep, come on, up you go. Something you do with those horses is you can desensitize them while moving. I'll really tell you what's going on, so if they're standing still and you throw the rope around and wave the flag around, whatever it might be they're already standing still. If they go into that shutdown mode, then they don't really tell you because I'm still standing still. Whereas if you can desensitize the horse while he's moving... so I just asked Bundy to go with this rope, I asked him and then I followed through with the rope. So, what I'm going to do right now is go around and take this rope and throw it over his back while he's going around here. So, you did it and he didn't really speed up and he didn't really stop and so he's telling me, 'yeah I'm good with the rope'.

There's one of two things he could have done - I mean he could've went, 'Oh my goodness' and he could have ran off. Which means I would just keep throwing this rope over until eventually when I go 'ok It's not going to kill me'. Or the other thing he could have done is he could have stopped, just froze and if he froze I'll ask him to go forward again and then continue throwing the rope until he can actually travel around here and be fine with that rope going over him. So whatever he's doing right now if you take the rope or the flag or whatever, whatever he's doing right now whatever speed he's going at, if you take this thing and you desensitize him with it and that speed stays constant that's a pretty good indication that the horse is not worried about it but hiding it and it doesn't matter what you're using- you could use the rope, you could use the flag... Off you go there Bundy... and you could use this lunging whip right here but it's really important that you are aware, that you notice if your horse has a bit of that shutdown thing. I see it at clinics all around the world; horses that people have trouble with and they've learned how to basically say, 'I'm fine'.

Any of you gentlemen watching this will know if you ask your wife a question sometime and she says 'I'm fine' you know she's not fine. It means she's quite upset about something and she doesn't want to talk about it. So we don't really want to get those horses to that state because they haven't come back down. If your wife says 'I'm fine' you're pretty sure you might be going to go to bed angry. So, it's something you want to be really careful of and just if you do any desensitizing stuff make sure you can do it while your horse is moving as well as standing still. Because if there's any shutdown stuff going on while they're standing still it will really come out and tell you when they're moving around.

So all of the don't go to bed angry work or the mental ups and mental downs that mentally resetting that I do on the ground then when I go to under saddle I'm going to do exactly the same thing. Everything I teach these horses to do has a... if it has a component of responsiveness I make sure right after that there's a component of relaxation. And for me, relaxation is the start of it and so you know, I want to be able to bend this horse's head and not have him move his feet. If I bend his head and he feels the need to move his feet, he's quite probably anxious. He is probably not relaxed. They are tight through their body. You know a lot of people think their horse might be stiff but then it can bend its head around and scratch its nose with its hind foot so they're not stiff. Usually a lot of times they're
mentally worried and so if you can get them to bend their head both ways without moving their feet that kind of tells you they're kind of relaxed. I had a really worried dressage horse a number of years ago that when I first rode him after being through all the groundwork and stuff, so he came in you know with other problems, and when I first rode him the first three days I spent nothing but three days reaching in here getting him to bend his head without moving his feet. Because he was always explosive and all sorts of crazy things. I did nothing but that for three days because he, from my way of thinking, this horse didn't have a relaxed state. He was never relaxed. Nothing was ever relaxed about him and so when you added more energy to the equation, he couldn't reset back to relax. What he could reset back to is anxious. Anyway, so it took me three days to get that bit good and by the fourth day when I actually went forward and rode him he walked, trotted, cantered on a loose rein he did things he's never really done before but he had that mental place to come back to. So, when I'm training horses, I really want to install the aids one at a time personally. So, this here, not only is it checking to see if my horse is relaxed it's working on my left rein aid. Are you responsive to my left rein aid? Does your whole-body bend softly when I pick up my left rein aid or my right rein aid, does your body bend softly when I pick up on my right rein aid? I think I've mentioned before in one of these episodes that I'm riding Bundy in a hackamore and it doesn't really matter what you're riding in. I just happen to like him in the hackamore. I have ridden him in the Snaffle for quite a while now, so once they can do that that's a relaxed thing.

So, the next aid I'm going to establish is my leg aid, can they be responsive to my leg aid. So this is an upward transition I'm just going to take my leg and slide it back there and as it makes contact with his side he should be responsive to that leg aid and when I release that leg aid he should be able to come straight back down back to that relaxed place. So that was from relaxed to responsive and back to relaxed. He knows how to get off just my leg aid but when I first start this, I usually carry a dressage whip. I'll lay my leg on there, if they don't get off it, I'll tap with that dressage whip. So, you've got the relaxation I was trying to get around that side so you could see how much leg I put on. Okay, so I've got him better and slide my leg back and as my leg slides back he responds with his feet, okay, take my leg off he should just come back to being relaxed. I'm going to wait until he's relaxed and I'm going to let go.

So in the saddle, for me, riding a young horse the first time I ever move their feet I don't move them very far. I start out relaxed and we go from relaxed to responsive and then back to relaxed again. The same thing on both sides. So he can bend his head without moving his feet, so I'm going to slide my leg back and get him to move his feet, when he moves his feet I'm going to release my leg, he's going to come back to being relaxed for me. If a horse cannot get through this bit right here, they don't know how to reset themselves from being up just a little bit like that- they're not going to be able to reset themselves from doing something big and technical. Kind of like my wife when she had the panic attack on the plane.

So once they can do those two things, the next thing I'm going to ask for is forward and I'm a big fan of like the classical French dressage way of looking at things- leg without hand, hand without leg. When I'm asking my horse to go forward initially, so I've already taught him how to get off this leg, and how to get off this leg, then I'm going to use both legs simultaneously and it goes forward. But I'm probably not going to go very far so that's leg without hand. I'm not going to go very far and then I'm going to make sure that he has not got too far from the relaxed state. I'm going to bend him around and wait for him to come back to a stop. So, if there are any rabbits in there right now, those rabbits have been removed and right now there's no rabbits and we are back again. So that downward transition was hand without leg, that upper transition was leg without hand. So, then I'd go again ask him to go and you know,
Bundy’s been ridden for quite a while, but if this was young horse on its first ride and I was say in the round pen or whatever, I wouldn't be steering. I would just let them go wherever they want to go and when I want to stop I just reach down there bend their head around and let them come to a stop. It's not I'm making him stop, it's can you find a stop? Because at slow speeds, that is very easy to tell your horse, I want you to stop right now. But you may leave some anxiety in there. So, when I bend these horses to a stop initially. So how I get to a stop is I bend them to a stop. When I initially bend them to a stop, I'm just going to wait for the stop. I don't care if it takes them 10 minutes to come to a stop, I'm just going to wait until they find that stop, then let go. So, I'm guaranteeing that I'm going from relaxed to responsive back to relaxed, even at the walk some horses can't even do that. Once they start trotting the same thing. I'll have them trot and when I want to stop, I'm going to reach down there, bend them around and wait for them to just come back to a walk then a stop. And then I will let go. And there is no leg in that downward transition, they've already got forward motion.

So I do it a lot from the walk. I do it a lot from the trot. And by the time you get to the canter, usually it's not hard to have them come back down again. So, if you're riding a green horse and you're trotting along here and you go for a bit of a canter, you should be able to reach down, just bend it around and wait for him to slow down. And there's a lot of reasons I do that. Mostly it is for the benefit of the relaxation. They come back down. But the other thing, I mean there's a lot of mechanical stuff, a lot of biomechanical stuff I'm teaching them, but as you guys would know, if you pick up on two reins on a horse and they are perfectly stiff, like straight stiff, they can push on you. If you put a bend in their body they cannot brace against you and so if you think about every downward transition I've done, the walk to halt transition, the trot to walk to halt transition and the canter, trot to walk helps them transition. They've all been quite fluid in that at no point time has the horse stiffened up on my hand or braced his legs. So, I'll just go for a bit of a canter here again. So, this canter here, I'm just watching... if you watch his legs, his feet and he comes to a stop. I'm not having very good luck with him stopping and pointing at the camera today. Am I? He keeps stopping and facing away from the camera but once we're back down here he is now back down, he has now reset himself and I think that's the big thing that most people, almost every problem horse I see around the world, the horse wants to get up but can't come back down. If I ever talk to eventers, a lot of the problems they say is when I get on the cross-country course I can't slow him down and you know, if you think about eventers there, they are going at high speed towards a rather large jump that does not move and if you can't regulate their stride going up to that jump, if they're too mentally up and they're pulling on your hands and you can't regulate that stride, I imagine that gets pretty dangerous right there.

So, hopefully that gives you some idea of the importance of the principle that I call ‘don't go to bed angry’ and the ability for those horses to control their emotions. Don't forget to join us next time while we look at another principle of training.