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# HORSEMAN



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# Get Ready for the Fair

## A WHOLE HORSE APPROACH:

### A LIFE TRANSFORMED BY HORSES - RYAN ROSE

*In the high-stakes, dust-swirled arenas of the horse world, “obedience” is often the word of the day. We want horses who stop when told, turn when asked, and stand when parked. But for Ryan Rose, a man who has spent two decades evolving from a horse-crazy kid into one of the industry’s most thoughtful clinicians and digital creators, obedience is a low bar. He’s looking for something much rarer: connection.*

As he prepares for a headlining appearance at the Midwest Horse Fair and a high-profile turn at Road to the Horse, Ryan is redefining what it means to be a 21st-century horse trainer. By blending the “soft skills” of legendary horsemen with the accessibility of modern technology, he is teaching a new generation of riders that the most powerful tool in their tack room isn’t a bigger bit—it’s a clearer conversation.

#### FROM THE ROUND PEN TO THE DIGITAL SCREEN

Ryan didn’t start in front of a camera. Like many professionals, he cut his teeth in the trenches of “colt starting”—the foundational process of giving a young horse his first experience with a saddle and rider. For years, he was the guy people sent their “problem” horses to, focusing on building foundations that would last a lifetime.

However, Ryan eventually hit a realization that many trainers reach but few act upon: the horse usually isn’t the one who needs the most help.

“At the end of the day, the horse goes home, and the person needs to be caught up to speed,” Ryan explains. “There are equal parts a need for trainers to help horses be safe, and for owners to invest in their own skills. Sometimes the horse is fine; it’s the person who needs the education.”

This epiphany shifted his trajectory. He moved from training horses in isolation to teaching clinics across the U.S. But even then, the reach was limited to whoever could haul their horse to a local arena on a Saturday morning. To share his philosophy on a grander scale, Ryan turned to YouTube.

Today, Ryan is a premier online creator. With hundreds of videos and a dedicated following on Patreon, he has transformed the solitary act of horse training into a global community. He films real sessions, showing the messy, unpolished reality of working with animals. It’s not just about the “win”; it’s about the process.



#### THE PHILOSOPHY: “DOING LESS FIRST”

If you ask Ryan what sets his approach apart, he doesn’t point to a specific maneuver or a piece of equipment. He points to intention.

“I have no interest in just making the horse listen to me because I said so,” Ryan says. “I love the feeling when they’re choosing to participate in the idea.”

This concept of “connection” is the golden thread woven through everything Ryan does, whether he’s working with a wild Mustang or a high-level dressage horse. He uses a relatable analogy: talking to a horse should be like a good Zoom call. You can tell when the person on the other end is truly listening, and you can tell when he or she is just waiting for a turn to speak (or worse, scrolling on a cell phone).

To achieve this, Ryan adheres to a few core principles:

1. Work with the horse where they are at.
2. Do less first.
3. Connection then position.

“It’s amazing how obedient horses can be,” Ryan notes. “But if the baseline is that the horse sees you as a predator and is trying to evade you, everything you do from there will be a struggle.”

#### THE “HORSE-CRAZY” KID FROM WISCONSIN

Ryan’s journey to the top of the clinician circuit wasn’t paved with expensive horses or family legacies. It was fueled by pure, unadulterated obsession.

“I had the bug from the time I was a little kid,” he laughs, recalling the dollar-a-ride pony circles and the birthdays spent

begging his parents for an hour-long trail ride. When he finally got his first horse at age 13—a spooky Palomino Quarter Horse named Flick—it wasn't exactly a fairytale. He fell off regularly and felt the cold sting of fear.

But Flick became his greatest teacher. Ryan started devouring books, videos, and auditing clinic. By age 16, he had already graduated from a farrier course, using the income from shoeing horses to fund his horsemanship education. This “all-in” mentality allowed him to make progress, but he never lost the perspective of the struggling student.

## MENTORSHIP AND THE “SOFT SKILLS”

Ryan credits much of his depth to Doug Jordan, a Hall of Fame cutting horse trainer. While Ryan already knew how to get a horse to perform, Jordan taught him the “why.”

“He taught me about how to give a horse responsibility and paying attention to the tiny details of body position,” Ryan says. “I was able to apply those soft skills to every other aspect of horsemanship, from liberty work to ranch trail.”

This influence is visible in Ryan's own teaching style. He isn't a drill sergeant; he's a mentor who finds as much joy in a student's “aha!” moment as he does in a successful colt start.

## COMPETITION VS. HORSEMANSHIP

In an industry where winning ribbons often takes precedence over a horse's well-being, Ryan maintains a refreshing stance on competition. He competes in ranch versatility—a discipline that tests a horse's ability to rope, cut cattle, and navigate obstacles—but he views it as a hobby, not a mandate.

He shares a poignant story about a well-bred reining horse he once owned. On paper, the horse had the pedigree to be a world champion. In reality? The horse didn't want the job.

“He didn't want to be a world champion reiner; he wanted to be a recreational trail horse,” Ryan recalls. “I could have forced it, but instead, I put a great foundation on him and found him a forever home where he'd be enjoyed for who he actually was.”

For Ryan, the horse's physical and mental capabilities dictate the timeline. He advocates for the “1% Better” Rule: if you can improve just a tiny bit each ride without overstressing the horse, you'll eventually reach the top of the mountain without leaving your partner behind.

## ABOUT MIDWEST HORSE FAIR

Since 1979, with a goal to serve as America's epicenter for the equine community, the fair strives to provide the ultimate experience for equine enthusiasts and the public through exposition, education, and entertainment. As the largest three-day horse fair in the U.S., it caters to both Western and English riders. The Midwest Horse Fair is owned by the Wisconsin Horse Council, a nonprofit organization that promotes the equine industry in the state of Wisconsin. Proceeds from the fair benefit the Wisconsin Horse Council for grants and scholarships, trail improvements, leadership programs, and communication to help future growth and development of the equine industry. The 2026 fair is scheduled to take place April 17-19 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, Wisconsin. For more information, visit [MidwestHorseFair.com](http://MidwestHorseFair.com).

## THE NEXT CHAPTER

This April, Ryan returns to his roots at the Midwest Horse Fair in Madison, Wisconsin. For him, it's a full-circle moment. He's been attending the fair since he was 13, rarely missing a year. Now, he returns as a featured clinician, tasked with the ultimate test of horsemanship: colt starting.

Working with a “blank slate” horse in front of a live audience is a high-pressure environment, but it's where Ryan's philosophy shines. He isn't just trying to get a saddle on a horse; he's trying to earn its trust in real-time.

“Colt starting is right in my wheelhouse,” says Ryan, who is also preparing for the prestigious Road to the Horse competition in March. “There's something special about those first introductions—helping a horse accept the rider and the communication for the very first time.”

## HOW TO FOLLOW RYAN

For those who can't make it to Madison, Ryan's digital door is always open. He continues to push the boundaries of online education through free videos on YouTube, a Patreon channel with a deep-dive coaching program, and a monthly “Horsemanship Challenge.” And his Community Coaching on his website which is a unique system where students film themselves and receive direct feedback, bridging the gap between virtual and live instruction.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Ryan believes that horsemanship is about more than just the horses; it's about personal growth. He's seen students become better leaders, more patient parents, and more confident professionals through the lessons they learned in the saddle.

As he looks toward the future, Ryan remains committed to the idea that everyone, regardless of their background, can build a “willing partner.” It just takes a bit of humility, a lot of consistency, and the willingness to do less first.

“If you want to develop self-confidence, you have to do hard things,” Ryan says. “And there's nothing easy about horses. But the lessons they teach us about connection? Those stay with you for life.”

For more information visit [rosehorsemanship.com](http://rosehorsemanship.com).

