Leadership Through Relationship (Skillbuilding)
Connection through Movement
Instructions & script

Purpose:

This exercise uses various steps to increase engagement, energy and power with the goal of having the horse follow you freely, without a halter and lead rope, increasing connection and trust as a result.

The formula of **commitment + crescendo + immediate positive feedback** is relevant here, though unlike free-lunging/Embody Intention, the crescendo happens through various steps that progressively increase power and influence to motivate the horse to come with you. If leading from the front position is effectively combined with impulse of driving at the back when necessary, a suitable horse tends to join up without needing further pressure.

The human analogy is a leader motivating someone to carry out a task or move forward on a goal. The "volume dial" on a scale of 1-10 would look like this 1) texting the person to check in or remind him of a deadline, then 2) calling him if there's no response, then 3) stopping by his office to check in on progress, then 4) calling him into their office for a formal meeting, then 5) engaging a more serious "productive conversation" meeting, then 6) giving a formal warning, then 7, 8, 9) moving through steps for possible dismissal.

An example involving a parent using this step-crescendo to get a child to clean his room can be found in The Power of the Herd, at the end of Guiding Principle 4 (the judge and her son).

Note: to be suitable for this exercise, horses that are worked with usually need to have had a fair measure of social conditioning in a herd with other horses. If they are not exposed to normal herd dynamcs and only led by humans through halters, ropes and riding tack, they may have gotten numbed down in their natural response to follow the herd leader. The exercise will then be a lot harder, if not impossible, to successfully demonstrate and complete.

Setup:

Take the time to properly explain this exercise to the client, preferably before you get to the horses. Once you are with the horses, their attention may be distracted and therefore important information may not stick.

1. The client gets to choose the horse they want to work with.
2. Safety: The client should stay on his/her feet, bring a "boundary setter," and should not put himself/herself between the horse and the fence.
3. In this exercise, the client's intention is to practice with specific skills. This intention and how the client can engage may be explored in the moment with the help of a body scan. However, the body scan is not part of the exercise in the same way as it is with most exercises.
4. The exercise contains a number of steps and is therefore finished when the steps have been completed or when the learning curve around the skill in question has been sufficiently explored. Sometimes the horse indicates when the session is finished (for

example, by no longer engaging and standing at the fence) - we always honor the horse's wishes first.

5. The client can talk to you if they have questions during the session.
6. In Skillbuilding sessions, your role is to proactively coach on the skill the exercise is about. It is important to leave it up to the "3x rule" whether you offer a tip or instruction immediately in the process, or whether you take a more questioning approach.
   If a client asks for help, make an assessment with your gut feeling and what you know about the client so far, whether they are asking this from their authentic self or survival behavior. Let that assessment determine how you deal with the request for help, and make sure that you don't respond to the desire of the false self (both yours and the client's!) to generate distraction from the challenge that causes the emotion Vulnerability to arise. If it is an authentic request for help, try to provide the help the client is seeking to the best of your ability. If it could be a false-self strategy, such as "learned helplessness," you might suggest, for example, that the client come out of the ring briefly to do another body scan, around what is currently being touched with them.
   (If you are not sure what to do, it is always better to initiate a body scan than to give instructions or ask further questions. If it is indeed the case that the client's survival behavior is getting in the way of engaging in the learning experience, your questions will soon give the head a chance to further engage with the distraction!) In Skillbuilding, you try to make the questions you ask as specific as possible to the learning around the skill and the actions the client is taking. Eg: "What were you trying to do?" "What was your intention with that movement?" "Why are you walking away from the horse at this point?" Etc.

Supplies:

For facilitator:

- Clipboard
- Script
- Pen and paper for notes
- Boundary device

For client:

- Pen and paper or notebook for notes
- Boundary device

SCRIPT

Step 1: Human <> Human demonstration

1. Start from a good distance away from the client. Then approach the client from the side until he or she responds by looking at you. Mention this represents the “zone of attention,” or “zone of engagement,” a proximity where the leader notices he/she’s having a physical effect on another person/horse through nonverbal cues of tension and/or attention.

   Rock back and sigh at that point, asking the client what effect this has on him/her. It also helps to then contrast this rock back and sigh effect by leaning in, holding your breath, focusing your eyes more intensely on the person, asking “what effect is this having on your body?”.

Mention that this "rock back and sigh" at the "zone or layer of attention/engagement" is a 1 on the power/attention/engagement dial.

2. Next, move to the next proximity layer, rock back and sigh, and after a moment, rock back and forth in that same location, breathing deeply. Ask the client what effect this is having. Usually, he/she begins rocking back and forth also. Draw attention to the fact that this is loosening his/her body while also attracting relaxed attention your way.

   Mention that this is a 2 on the dial.

3. Now, with a little bit more energy and enthusiasm, still breathing deeply (with energy not relaxation), arc around in front of the client. As you pass 12 o'clock, increase the energy, breathe out and move around the arc to at least 4 o'clock. Be sure the whip is in the hand furthest from the client/horse. Ask what effect this has. (Help him/her notice that s/he was compelled to follow your movement while also shifting weight from one leg to another.)

   State that this is a 3 on the power dial.

4. Now illustrate what happens when you arc back around in front again, with even more energy and enthusiasm and exhaling from 12 o'clock to at least 8 o'clock. Be sure to have switched the whip to the hand furthest from client/horse. (Moving around the arc again causes him/her to follow you with his gaze while further shifting weight and loosening his legs.)

   State that this is a 4 on the dial.

5. Now, if the client/horse still has not moved, position yourself slightly behind and to the side of the client/horse, switch the boundary setting device to the hand closest to the client/horse and gently wave it, steadily crescendoing to encourage forward movement until the person/horse moves forward. At no point should the boundary setting device ever make contact with the client/horse. The intention is to use the device to help create forward driving force.

   State that this is a 5,6,7,8…. crescendo on the dial.

6. As the person/horse moves forward, sigh audibly and convey connection with a positive nonverbal and verbal interaction, illustrating that immediate positive feedback is not about empty praise, but full-bodied engagement.

7. If the client has experienced Embodying the Goal, you can also explain that levels 9-10 of this process involve invoking the brief use of "dominance" by using the lunge whip to get the horse moving around the arena, raising his energy and respect, before then joining up and giving the horse immediate positive feedback *while moving.*

Step 2. Human <> Human demonstration: switch roles

Now allow the client to practice the crescendo steps by approaching you and getting you to move with him or her.

Step 3. Human <> Horse demonstration

Repeat step 1 to 7 with a horse, allowing the client to watch you do it.

Note: if the client has plenty of horse experience and had a good understanding in the Human to Human demo, you may skip this part and go straight to Step 4.

8. If the horse still isn't moving the next step is positional leadership. Positional leadership involves putting a halter on the horse and leading him around the arena briefly, before removing the halter and then joining up at liberty with the horse, giving immediate positive feedback while moving.

9. Explain that some clients will tend to praise the horse by petting them, which causes the movement to stop. Praising, smiling, sending appreciation to the horse *in motion* is the immediate positive feedback skill here.

Step 4. Allow the client to go through the steps with the horse

When client asks for help, or feel stuck, check the level of intention / commitment and energy / crescendo and coach the client on where you feel they need to better dose their energy or commitment.

Additoinal questions you may use:"

- "'What were you trying to do?" / "What was your intention with that movement?" / "Why are you walking away from the horse at this point?"/ "What was your intention?"
- "What needed to be activated in you in the body scan?" / "What did the horse need from you?" (Remind the client of this if they have forgotten).
- Sometimes they already got the point and are looking for something more, in which case, "Does the exercise feel complete?" / "Do you want to try something more?"
- Note this pitfall: if you ask "What's happening?" in a skill-building exercise, you run the risk of the client getting stuck in focusing on, and/or repeating, his or her "story" (Drama Triangle!) rather than practicing with the skill. The intent, of course, is to give space to the client's story if it is an emotional block in their ability to engage in practicing the skill. The difference is very subtle, and can be very difficult to recognize. This is why we avoid this question in skill-building exercises.
- It is very tempting to start giving instructions to make the client do it BETTER than they are already doing it. Sometimes this can be appropriate, e.g. if the client already has a higher level of horse experience and their learning curve is about refinement. But be careful to stop in time, i.e. as soon as the client has achieved success, so always end on a positive note and then don't start making it another level harder. When learning something new, "perfect" is usually the biggest enemy of "good enough"!
- Also, beware of the temptation to turn it into a lesson in horse training. These exercises are about the client's inner process of being able to apply the skill in daily life, not about teaching the horse something or making it move better!

When the exercise is complete for the client, you can suggest that the client comes outside the ring to finish with the horse, and suggest that they thank the horse first.

Step 5: Completion:

This is a SKILLBUILDING exercise. So you complete it with the skillbuilding questions:

1. What went well/what was successful?
2. What were challenges you encountered?
3. How did you face these? / How did you overcome these? / What could you refine? / What could you experiment with?
4. What do you take away/have you learned about Leadership through Relationship?

If it occurs to you 3 times, give the client one observation back about something you yourself noticed. Do this in “I statements” in the way you phrase it. Example: "The moment you gave your clue more emphatically, the horse immediately started to move. I associated that with both finding something exciting and being determined to do it."

Again, beware of your own ego! Do not give the client an analysis of his or her actions. You may give observations, but choose your wording very consciously so that there is no judgment about HOW it went. Not even if the client asks for it. Make sure the client's initiative and attempt, however clumsy, is seen and positively confirmed.

Eg: "Of course, the more often you work with horses in this way, the easier it becomes. What matters is what you learned from engaging in the exercise" / "I got the impression that you really had to gather courage to increase your crescendo to Level 5. Well done for persevering in that!"