

Hello and welcome to the Horsefulness Training Podcast. I'm karine Vandendorre, I'm a professional horse trainer and instructor, founder of Horsefulness Training and creator of the online Horsefulness Training Programs.

In this second episode of the Horsefulness Training Podcast I'm going to talk about Groundwork. I'll explain what Groundwork is and why it is so valuable. After that I'm going to answer 5 questions that were sent to me by mail.

And at the end of the podcast I'm also going to reveal the 2 winners who shared their story and pictures on social media. They won a Free membership to the Horsefulness Liberty Training Program!

But first, let's talk about groundwork and answer some questions!

Are you ready?

Music

Horsefulness Training exists of 4 training components. The first one is Liberty Training. Liberty Training forms the foundation of Horsefulness Training. With liberty training you develop a true connection and a clear communication. The second training component then is Groundwork, the third is Gymnastic Groundwork and the fourth is Bitless Riding.

So, Groundwork is the second training component. Groundwork are all the exercises you do with your horse while you are on the ground and holding your horse on a lead rope. The horse is therefore not in liberty anymore. But, it is not because the horse is literally not in liberty, that the horse isn't free anymore.

A horse should always have the feeling it is free, free to be the horse he wants to be, free to have his own feelings and opinions, free to express itself fully! So yes, we are holding the horse on a lead rope, but the horse should always remain free, in whatever you do with your horse, if it's liberty, groundwork or riding.

This doesn't mean that the horse can always do what he wants to or that he is allowed to always do his own thing without taking us into account. Or that we can't say to our horse what we expect from him and what we need him to do. What it does mean is that we never punish the horse if he expresses his opinion, or that we force the horse to do things he's not ready to do yet or he doesn't understand. It means that we are open to what the horse is telling and that we always try to work together instead of against the horse.

During groundwork we start "training" the horse. This means we start teaching him things that aren't natural. The fact alone that we hold the horse on a halter and a rope for example is already unnatural. And we teach things like standing tied to the wall, picking up the hoofs, loading into a trailer, etc. These are all things that horses don't do in nature.

Because these are all situations which would never occur when your horse wouldn't live with humans, but in the wild. We have to teach this to our horse.

So an important thing groundwork does for your horse is helping him to deal with life in the "human world". And, to be happy in the human world!

But groundwork will do more than that for you and your horse. Let me sum up the main reasons you should do groundwork.

- ✓ First of all Groundwork is very good to maintain and further develop the friendship and connection you have developed during Liberty Training
- ✓ You will also learn to give good guidance and show leadership, in situations that are more difficult (think about traffic training or taking your horse to unknown places)
- ✓ You will learn how to define boundaries when the horse is on the lead (which is often more difficult on the lead than in Liberty, that's why it's always best to first do Liberty Training).
- ✓ Groundwork will also help your horse understand the human world and human wishes (such as daily handling and care, being attached on the wall, trailer loading, traffic, vet treatments, ...)
- ✓ Groundwork helps fearful or traumatized horses to overcome their fears and traumas.
- ✓ Horsefulness Groundwork is also the preparation for Gymnastic Groundwork and bitless riding. I always say: for good riding you need 80% groundwork and only 20% of riding.
- ✓ Groundwork also helps you to develop yourself to be the best possible trainer for your horse, because the more skills you have, the better you will be able to train and help your horse.
- ✓ It also gives you and the horse more variation in training.
- ✓ And it helps your horse to remain fit and balanced on every level, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual
- ✓ Groundwork is crucial if you want to help your horse to be happy in the human world!

There is Basic Groundwork and Continued Groundwork.

Basic groundwork are all the basic exercises that you and your horse should know and train before you can proceed with the Continued Groundwork. This doesn't mean that Basic Groundwork is for beginners, far from it! All the basic exercises can be done in a very simple and elementary way, but you can also make these exercises more challenging and difficult.

And the same with Continued Groundwork.

So, many Basic Groundwork exercises exist and they can be divided into five main groups

1. Lead exercises
2. Touch exercises
3. Yielding for physical aids
4. Yielding for driving aids
5. Circle work.

When you and your horse master these 5 basic groundwork exercises you are both ready to proceed to Continued Groundwork.

Continued Groundwork involves

- Groundwork with the neck rope
- Obstacle training
- The double long lines
- Trailerloading
- Traffic training
- Preparation for riding.

When you take the time it takes for Liberty Training and Basic Groundwork, then all the Continued Groundwork will be more successful. You will be able to explain and guide your horse better in these exercises. Because the connection is there, the communication is there and you have already learned how to work with your horse.

So, with that all said, I think you now have a good view on what Groundwork is about and why it's important to do it. If you want to know more about it, then go visit my website. That's www.horsefulnessstraining.com or if you are Dutch speaking www.horsefulness.be

Now, let's dive into the questions! The 5 questions that I'm going to answer have in common that they're all related to Groundwork or that the solution to a challenge the sender is experiencing is found in doing Groundwork with his horse.

This is the first question and it was sent in by Esse from the Netherlands . Esse writes:

My horse is pretty anxious about tractors and big vehicles on the road. She is also very spooky when we pass bushes and branches. When she is afraid she tenses herself and it seems like there is a haze over her eyes. She disconnects and only wants one thing: run off!

I would like to stay connected, especially in these kind of situations. I would like her to trust me and understand that I can lead her safely through this challenging situation. I can only do that when she is not panicking. She dares to jump in front of a tractor in an attempt to get away.

I already learned that I have to stay calm in the saddle, with loose reins. I know it helps to focus on the direction I want to go and not on the scary thing. I already experienced that she is more calm herself then. But I can still feel that she disconnects, how can I keep her with me?

I also realize that I also disconnect in a way in fearful situations. When she gets so scared, then I get scared to. She also threw me off a few times when she ran off. It helps when I talk to her about my fears when something like that happens.

So my question is: how can I keep the connection when she is so afraid?

First of all: it is very good already that you know that staying calm yourself and focusing on the direction you want to go instead of the scary thing is helping you and your horse. You also experienced that talking to her about your fears is helping you both. The reason for that is, when you talk about your fear, it means you are accepting it, and by accepting a fear you bring yourself to the present moment and that fear starts to get less intense. So accepting your fear helps you to be less tensed and your horse can feel that.

So you already know part of the answer to your question: to stay connected it's important to stay calm and soft in the body, and to stay present.

If it is difficult to stay present, then use your breath. Bring your awareness to your breath and focus on keeping your body soft, instead of tensed. At the same time it is important, like you also already experienced, that you guide your horse in the right direction. So don't look at the scary object, but look into the direction you want to go. Also use your seat aids, and other aids to communicate in which direction you want your horse to move.

But we are talking about riding here already. And before you can do that in the saddle, I would first teach my horse to stay calm and connected on the road, while I lead him on the ground. I never go in traffic with a horse in the saddle, when he's still anxious and spooky when I am on the ground.

So here is where Groundwork plays such an important role! When you and your horse master the Basic Groundwork exercises and when you have done obstacle training and that goes well, only then you are ready to take your horse for walks in hand on the road.

So that is what I advise you to do.

When you are leading your horse, your horse will be less anxious. It's more natural for a horse to seek support and guidance with someone who is on the ground, than with someone who is on his back. On the ground your horse can see you, he can follow you, and you will be less anxious yourself because you can't fall off your horse.

While leading your horse on the ground, you apply the same methods to guide your horse past scary things than when you do in the saddle: connect with your breath, stay soft in your body, focus on the direction you want to go.

It can help to ask your horse to stand still when a tractor passes, and to look at the tractor. So keep your horse's head in the direction of the tractor.

What you can do to prepare for tractors on the road, is ask a farmer in your neighbourhood to come with his tractor to your place, or you go to the farmer yourself and you do a tractor training.

If you do that a few times, until your horse dares to go to near the tractor and even touch it and the horse stays relaxed and calm, then do the same with the engine running. You can also practice walking and trotting around the tractor, walking and trotting away and towards the tractor. And after that you can train with the tractor that moves, that passes your horse, that comes towards your horse and drives away from your horse again.

Next, you can practice with the tractor on the road, just passing each other, just like another tractor or vehicle would do. First you do that while you are on the ground leading your horse on a single lead rope, and next, you can train this in the double long lines. When all that goes well, you and your horse are ready to train this in the saddle. It's actually a very fun training to do and you can also do that with cars and bikes and motorcycles.

When you have done these kind of trainings off road, then take your horse on the road for walks in hand and you will notice that the horse will be less afraid, it is still possible that a little tension comes up, because no tractor or vehicle is the same, but because of the tractor training, you have already learned how to guide your horse, and your horse has gained a lot more trust in you and more courage and trust that all these things are not a reason to become anxious.

Before I take a horse under saddle I then do the same in the double long lines. Because then you are no longer walking in front of your horse, but you walk behind your horse, so now the horse must be more courageous, he is the first to pass a scary object. Only when you can do long walks in the double long lines and all goes well, you are ready to do the same in the saddle.

So Esse, go back to the basics of groundwork so you can lead your horse in a safe and correct way, then do obstacle training at home with all kinds of obstacles you can think of, after that start tractor training, then proceed with taking your horse out for walks in hand. When that goes well do the same in the double long lines and only when your horse stays calm and confident in traffic in the double long lines, start riding your horse in the saddle on the road.

And also very important Esse: when your horse gets afraid of something, and you feel like you will lose control and you get afraid too, just get off your horse!

People often think that when you get off the horse when it is afraid, the horse will then learn that it must act like it is afraid to get you off, but that is not true at all! Getting off your horse prevents you

from falling and injuring yourself, your safety is always the most important and also : most horses get calmer immediately. They can see you again, they can follow you and they find more support.

So stay on your horse if possible, but get off from the moment you feel you need to, and help your horse on the ground. When the horse is calm again, then you can mount again and continue the ride. You will notice that you will have to get off less and less.

I wish you success with this Esse and enjoy the training. Take your time for it, even if this takes a few months or even a year, that doesn't matter at all. What matters is that every training you have is fun and safe and it's the process that counts, not the end result. The end result will come, but you have to take it step by step, it's about helping your horse today. Every day again and if you take the right steps and enjoy every part of the process, everything will fall into place.

Now let's go to question number 2. This is a question from Therese from Germany. Therese says: My horse loads very easily into the trailer, but he is afraid to back up out of the trailer. Any advice on how to train him to back up instead of turning in the trailer to unload?

First of all it's important you don't let your horse turn into the trailer anymore to come out. The more you let him turn, the more it becomes a pattern and the more difficult it will become to prevent him from doing it. Turning in the trailer can be dangerous also, I have seen horses get stuck and injured by it. So from now on, don't allow that anymore, but start training your horse to back up and never go back to turning in the trailer.

The reason that horses are afraid to back up, is that they don't see right behind them, so they don't see where they put their hoofs. Especially in the trailer, where the ramp goes down, it can be a bit scary to step backwards and then feel that the ground is lower. The horse can think it will step into a hole, or it can be afraid that it will fall. It's also a matter of body awareness. Horses that lack body awareness and especially horses that lack body awareness in the limbs tend to have difficulties with stepping backwards. It's like they don't "feel" where their legs are and therefore don't know very good where to put them and how to step backwards.

So, how can you help your horse with that? It's quite easy actually.

Start with body awareness exercises: stroke your horse all over his body, and especially the legs. Stroke with 2 hands and take your time for it, do it slow and precisely. Massage and stretching of the body and the legs is also helpful. You can do that every day for about 10 minutes or as long as the horse enjoys it.

Then the second thing you can do is walk and trot over poles and cavaletti. This helps the horse to think about where to put his hoofs. Then teach your horse to back up while you stand in front of the horse and ask your horse with your body language and physical aids to step backwards. If your horse understands this and can step back in a soft way for about 10 to 15 steps, then you can introduce poles, and teach your horse to step back over poles. First 1, then 2 and more.

Practice that until your horse understands he can also back up over things. He will gain more body awareness and coordination of the legs.

Another thing you can do to prepare for the trailer, is teach your horse to back up from a bridge. A bridge is a wooden board, that you can put on the ground for the horse to walk over . You can also put it a bit higher and you can even make it to tilt.

If your horse is not afraid to walk over it anymore, then ask him to back up from it. Like that the horse learns to back up and put his feet lower while doing that. If you put one side higher than the other, it starts to feel even more like the ramp of the trailer.

When all that goes well, then practice with the ramp of the trailer.

Ask your horse to step on the ramp with one front hoof and then back up again. Then 2 front hoofs and back up. Then a bit further on the ramp and back up. Then with 1 hind hoof and back up. And when that goes fine, ask your horse to come onto the ramp with 2 hind hoofs and then back him up. Reward your horse with a food reward every time he steps backwards.

When that goes well, you can ask the horse to come a bit further into the trailer, but don't ask your horse to come in with his 4 feet, it's possible that this would be too much already and that he wants to turn again. So ask him in, keeping his hind legs are still on the ramp, and practice backing up, rewarding him with every step he backs up.

Continue like that until your horse is with his 4 feet in the trailer. When your horse is so used to turn into the trailer it is possible that he will try it again, but don't let him! By now your horse is perfectly capable of stepping backwards, so be consequent and ask him to step backwards. Keep rewarding with every step.

Don't practice too long also: make sure your horse stays motivated. Your horse doesn't have to back up from the trailer after the first session yet, you can take a few sessions for it. If you follow the steps like I described here, then I'm sure all will work out fine!

And now, for question number 3. This question is from Katlijn.

Katlijn says: If Liberty is the foundation and you can do everything in Liberty, why do you go to Groundwork? Can't we do everything in Liberty? What is the benefit of doing Groundwork?

You are right that everything you can do with a horse can be done in liberty. You can lead a horse in liberty, circle your horse in liberty, play with your horse, groom –wash – massage your horse in liberty, you can even trailerload, and do dressage-exercises in liberty. And if you that's what you want, you can do that, no problem at all.

However, in my opinion it is also necessary to train your horse in groundwork. The first reason is that you want your horse to get used to have a halter on his head and get used to physical pressure on the head. You also want your horse to be able to be tied to the wall and to be led with a halter and a rope. It's perfectly fine if you don't do that at home, but what if your horse needs to go the hospital one day? People there will use a halter and a rope. Your horse will get tied, your horse will have to cope with other people using these tools. So only for that already it is important that your horse knows all this. Another thing is, that in most trailers a horse has to be tied, for his safety in the trailer.

Groundwork is also the preparation for traffic training. Traffic training is first done while taking your horse out in hand, so your groundwork skills need to be good, if you want to do that. If your horse gets frightened of something when you walk with him, then you don't want the horse to take off and be a danger to himself and others on the road. Even when you can lead your horse in liberty, it's always a risk when you go out on the road and in traffic with a horse in liberty.

Especially with the kind of liberty I am teaching, the horse always has the opportunity to leave us, we don't condition the horse to stay with us no matter what.

So if the horse knows it is allowed to go when at home, where we work in our arena or field, then it will also do that on the road.

When we start Groundwork however, we teach the horse: now you are led by a rope, you can still express your feelings, you can still say what you like and what you don't like, but I do expect from you that you don't pull the rope and run off.

With Groundwork you have a lot more possibilities, you can take your horse to other places, and not-known environments in a safer way.

Another thing to know is that groundwork is the preparation for Gymnastic Groundwork and Bitless Riding. So with Groundwork we already start to train certain things that the horse will need in Gymnastic Groundwork and Riding, think about the rein aids. And yes, you can ride without reins too, but like always: In my opinion it is best to teach your horse both, to be ridden with and to be ridden without reins.

Often people think that Liberty Training is much more horse friendly than Groundwork, but that is only in the head of the people, they think: "liberty is liberty, the horse is free, that's the perfect world for the horse! And during groundwork the horse is on the rope, it is not free anymore, therefore it is not so good for the horse like liberty".

But let me tell you that Liberty Training can be worse than Groundwork! Horses that are chased around in a round-pen, horses that are being tapped with a whip on the belly until they stick to their human no matter what, that is not true liberty...

Because when you didn't see those processes, what happened behind the scenes, and you only see the end result, you could think: "wow, that's amazing, that's so beautiful!" But there was no true liberty involved there...

When there is True Liberty, your horse does not stick to you like glue. When there is True Liberty, your horse is allowed to say no. When there is True Liberty, your horse will run away when it feels the need to. When there is True Liberty, your horse will say: "now I don't feel like staying perfectly close to you, I want to go that way: are you following???"

And when we're using the same principles like in good liberty during Groundwork, we're doing good Groundwork. Because when doing good Groundwork, your horse is also allowed to say no, when there is good Groundwork your horse will also say to you: "I prefer to go that way, are you following?"

It's up to you to go with it, yes or no, to agree or to not agree. It's up to you to build up such a relationship with your horse that it doesn't matter if your horse is led by a halter and a rope or not, it feels the same to the horse, because the horse feels good about you, about your relationship, it trusts you and likes to be with you.

And yes, we start this relationship in Liberty, because that is the most natural way for a horse to communicate and to bond, but when the connection is strong and the communication is clear between you two, then you are ready to start a new way of being together and that is during Groundwork, where you will start to train things that your horse will need to be able to be ok with in the human world.

So, Katlijn I hope, I was able to explain you the reason to do Groundwork. It gives you more

possibilities than if you would only work in Liberty and it's also necessary for teaching your horse certain things that he will need in the human world.

The 4th question is from Vera.

Vera says: I'm 52 and I have bought my first horse 6 months ago. I found an instructor and I currently follow groundwork lessons every 2 weeks. In the last lesson my instructor taught me how to train my horse to yield for direct pressure.

I had to use phases and if my horse didn't react at the last phase I had to continue to pull firmly on the halter until my horse gave in to the pressure. But my horse didn't want to yield and the more pressure I used, the more my horse started to pull back.

It felt wrong to do this and I felt guilty afterwards to have put my beautiful horse through this. My instructor said that if I wanted a light and obedient horse, this is the only way to do it.

But is it really necessary to teach your horse to yield for direct pressure?

What are your thoughts about this?

Well, yes, I do think it is necessary to teach your horse to yield for direct pressure. But of course, the way you do that is of major importance. If your horse starts pulling back, then you are using too much pressure, it's not communication anymore, it's force. That's why you feel so bad about it, it just doesn't feel right, there is no communication.

Yielding for direct or indirect pressure should be about communication and not a way to pressure your horse. That's why I prefer to say "yielding for physical aids" instead of "yielding for direct pressure".

Let me read an article for you that I wrote a while ago. the title is is: Yielding for physical aids

One of the [basic Groundwork exercises](#) is *yielding to physical aids*. The purpose of this basic [Groundwork](#) exercise is teaching the horse to go along with the slight pressure he/she feels on his/her body, to yield in other words.

"Yielding to physical aids" is the same as "yielding to direct pressure", but I prefer to name it "yielding to physical aids". Because it is my intention that the horse experiences the physical pressure as an "aid", something that "helps" him to understand what is asked.

Many things we do with horses have something to do with pressure, and so for keeping the daily handling and training of the horse enjoyable and safe (not just for us, for the horse too), **it is very important that the horse learns to yield to direct pressure instead of going against it.** We can do that in a respectful step by step manner.

Teaching yielding to pressure is an exercise in which one applies negative reinforcement. For instance, you ask the horse to take a step backwards. You apply pressure to the nose with the halter. When the horse takes a step back, you let go. As a result, the pressure is gone. Because the pressure is released you reinforce the horse's action on that moment, namely stepping backwards. You have rewarded your horse.

The fact that you take something away is the reward, because the horse is relieved of that which feels less comfortable than when it is not there. That sounds sad, which is why you sometimes hear people suggest that it is "not done" to teach a horse to yield to pressure. In reality, these people also constantly use negative reinforcement, but they are not aware of it.

Think about:

- **teaching a horse to be attached to a wall.** When the horse steps back too far, the rope tightens; the horse will have to be able to handle the pressure behind the ears. A horse taking a step forward is a horse yielding to the direct pressure behind the ears. A horse that begins to pull the rope and tries to get loose is a horse that resists and does not yield to the physical pressure behind the ears. A young horse will have to learn to yield to pressure behind the ears. You do that by teaching the horse to take a step forward when you apply a light physical aid on the halter. On that moment you release the pressure.

And:

- **asking a horse to get off the trailer backwards** = you will first teach this by making the horse yield to physical aids (direct pressure) on the chest (or nose, depending on how you do it).
- **asking your horse to take a step to the side so that you can pass** = your horse yields to the pressure of your hand on the side of his/her body
- **asking your horse to lift his/her hoof:** your horse yields to the pressure of your hands on his/her lower leg.
- **as well as normal leading.** Even though you mostly use your body language here, the horse could be startled and tighten the rope for instance. A horse that has not learned to yield to pressure will need more time to calm down again, because in addition to the startle response, the sudden pressure behind the ears can lead to a panic response.

And you do not only use yielding to physical aids when it comes to the daily handling, but also when it comes to lunging and riding:

- **Asking lateral flexion** with the inside rein = yielding to direct pressure of the inside rein.
- **Asking lateral flexion on the lunge**= your horse yields to the direct pressure of the lunge.
- Asking your horse **to step forward whilst riding** = yielding to direct pressure of the leg.
- Having your horse do a leg-yield = your horse yields sideways to the direct pressure of the leg
- ...

Negative reinforcement to reward the horse, thus sounds more negative than it actually is. So, this is not so negative **as long as you take into account the feelings of the horse** when teaching yielding to pressure, and as long as you make sure you are not frightening, upsetting or hurting the horse. This also means that your physical aids should really be *aids*, with the intention to help the horse and not to force the horse. Because in that case there is no communication, but force. **And physical aids should always be communication, not force!**

How do you do that?

It is extremely important that you use the right body language, but also that you **have the right intention** and work with much feel. When you ask your horse to yield for physical aids, what you are actually doing is asking your horse to move in a certain direction. For example: if you ask "head low" then you are asking your horse to move with his head downwards. If you ask to back up, then you ask your horse to move in that direction.

So when asking your horse to yield or to yield with a particular body part, then this will go much easier when you ask this with an intention of "**giving direction**" versus asking to yield for pressure. Your horse will feel the difference in energy, it will feel more friendly and more natural to your horse.

You also need to start applying the physical aid – the physical pressure – very subtly, so that you never have to use too much pressure, and you need to set up the phases in such a way that the horse has time to think about it, try things and eventually come to the right solution.

Never use phases in which you apply so much pressure that the horse becomes angry or frightened. If your horse does not yield to light pressure, **look for an alternative**. Either you wait or you help the horse find the solution by, for example:

- With [head down](#) and [nose to flank](#) -> **inviting with your other free hand**
- With *forequarter-yield* -> **adjusting your position and posture**
- **Making use of obstacles** such as beams, the fence or a hallway to help the horse find “the solution”.

You do not only have to work with negative reinforcement (releasing the pressure). You can also **use a combination** of negative and positive reinforcement (such as a food reward).

Learning to yield to pressure should be seen as a form of communication, **just like a six-year-old child learning to read**, which makes his/her life a whole lot easier. A horse yielding to physical aids is a real pleasure to work with. It understands your aids better, which **gives the horse more self-confidence and confidence in the trainer!**

I also wrote another interesting article about yielding for physical aids, it's called: [yielding to physical pressure with feel](#). You can find the link in the introtext of this episode. Be sure to read that too Vera.

And if you want to learn how to do this yourself, how to teach your horse to yield for physical aids in a respectful and horsefriendly way, then take a look at the online groundwork program I developed, because there I explain and show everything into depth, for you to be able to do this at home with your horse. Visit my website horsefulnessstraining.com if you want more info or send me an email at info@horsefulnessstraining.com

The last question is from Walter. He writes: I have been doing groundwork with my young horse now for more than 1 year. She is really doing great, she is smart and is very cooperative. But lately she seems a bit unmotivated. I think the groundwork is too easy for her and therefore she loses interest. I would like to get some tips on how to make it more difficult and stimulating for her and me.

Well, Walter, that is a very good question and it's a question I get very often.

As I already explained in this episode, Groundwork is done for several reasons. Think about learning to deal with human requests and keeping an optimal connection with your horse. But another important reason is also that you try to keep your horse fit on every level, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually and this is only possible when you make groundwork a little bit more challenging each time.

When you do the same exercises the horse already knows over and over and over, the horse loses interest. A lot of horses will then become less motivated so you too stop enjoying it and this results that not a lot of Groundwork is being done anymore because it gets boring.

But that's a shame, because it's possible to make sure that Groundwork stays interesting, challenging and fun!

First of all: try to make the groundwork exercises that your horse already knows a bit more challenging: ask your horse to perform the exercises more precise, more fluent, a bit faster or a bit slower, etc. And also train yourself to use more subtle aids and subtle and softer body language.

Training in other places can also be challenging. Most people train in their own paddock or arena. Of course, there the training goes easy. To make it a bit more challenging you can also start to train in other places, for example the arena of a neighbour, or the arena of the local riding school.

Practicing your groundwork exercises on the street or in a field is also very fun and different. You'll notice that you have to put in more effort to keep your horse's attention.

At the same time your horse learns how to deal with new and unknown places and situations.

Secondly: introduce obstacle training: think about working with tarpaulins, poles, cones, jumps, umbrella's, narrow passages, flags, water, The combinations you can put together are endless! So that is my first tip: introduce obstacle training and use your imagination to create new challenging exercises with obstacles.

In one of the previous questions I talked about tractor training. You can also do those things. Traffic training, water training, animal training (like teaching your horse to stay calm and relaxed in a herd of cows). Trailer training is also something you can do. If your horse knows this already, then teach your horse to back up into the trailer, just for fun. You hear me: the possibilities are endless!!

Another tip is to start working with the neckrope, so instead of using a halter, use the neckrope. You will notice that when you take off the [rope halter](#) and instead practice with a neck rope you have to be much more conscious about your body language. You cannot "correct" with the head, something that happens often unknowingly and unintentionally. Many exercises become therefore a lot more challenging when you start working with a neck rope.

And when Basic Groundwork goes well with the neckrope, then go to obstacle training and traffic and so on, all with the neckrope.

Another fun thing to do is training your horse in the double long lines. It's again another way of playing with your horse and my experience is that most horses like it.

What I also advise is to put together groundwork sequences.

A groundwork sequence is a succession of groundwork exercises that are done several times in a row. You practice these groundwork sequences until it goes smooth and easy. Depending on the difficulty, you are often working on a sequence 1 to 3 weeks. After that you change your sequence here and there or you make a complete new one.

This way you can put together countless different groundwork sequences, from very easy to very difficult. Because once one can be done very well, you just make a new one! By doing sequences you can work with less and less aids. Your body language becomes better and you and your horse will become more and more attuned to each other.

So, as you can see Walter, there are still so many things you and your horse can do together that are challenging and fun, and there are even more than I discussed here. Like I already said: the possibilities are endless!

So, that was it for the 5 groundwork questions!

To end this episode of the Horsefulness Training Podcast I still have to announce the winning pictures and stories of the contest from the previous episode!

Because 2 people could win a free membership for the [Horsefulness Liberty Training Program](#) or coaching call if you're already a member.

And the winners are...

Chantal Richard from Canada and Elaine Sanders, also from Canada .

Congratulations Chantal, you won a Free coaching call, your picture was so beautiful and moved me a lot, because of the change that happened with your horse Kodak.

This is what you wrote about your picture: "What you don't see is how Kodak was when I first got her. Terrified. Shut down. Panicked. Spooky. Distrustful of humans. Without Horsefulness Training, we would not be here today. I probably would have sold her because she was just too much for me. Instead, I have the deepest relationship I have ever had with any animal. I am moved to tears every time she turns to me for comfort, reassurance, and bonding. I'm not sure she has ever known this kind of relationship with a human either. It's safe to say that thanks to Karine, we are friends for life now. Oh, and my 13 year old daughter took this photo. And now, she can see that there is another way to have a relationship with her own horse because of this program."

The other winner is Elaine Sanders, about why she loves Horsefulness Training she writes:

"Horsefulness Training recently released a podcast. I am so grateful to have stumbled upon it. I connected to everything that she said. It is like I have known this content in my heart all along, but I've been led astray by other ways it "should" be done, with rules, and mind games. It feels like I have just been given permission to follow my heart and do what I've always known to be right in my interactions with horses.

I came to a realization: other training methods aim to mentally train the brain of the horse, but this goes into the heart of the horse, existing in the emotional level and allowing it to spread naturally into the mind and body the horse. Just today before playing with my horse, I spent five minutes doing HeartMath and just being still with my horses. Then as we played together at liberty and in the saddle, we were amazing together! We were focused, connected, and calm. Anytime that I felt our connection wavering a bit, I would stop her and refocus on my heart. It was a technique I'll be sure to repeat each and every time!

Looking forward to more great material from you! Thank you!"

Congratulations Elaine, you won a Free Membership to the horsefulness Liberty training program. Send a mail to info@horsefulnesstraining.com and we will get back to you!

And for the listeners: if you didn't win this time, don't worry! You can try again for the next podcast because then I'm giving away another free membership for the Horsefulness Liberty Training Program or personal coaching call if you're already a member.

All you need to do is share your story about what horsefulness training means to you or what it did for you and your horse on your facebook or twitter profile and use the hashtag:

#ilovehorsefulnesstraining

Or post your most moving or special picture of you and your horse doing liberty, groundwork or bitless riding, using the hashtag

#myhorsefulnessmoment.

I will be reading and looking at all the stories and pictures! Ask a friendship request if you participate because only then I can find and see your post!

Thank you for listening to this episode about Groundwork and I encourage you to subscribe on i-tunes or your favorite service and please leave your comments and reviews. That way you too can help spreading the Horsefulness Training philosophy!

For next time, I'll be talking about FEEL & TIMING. So be sure to not miss that episode!

I want to leave you here with the following important message:

Care for you horse, connect with your horse, And make a difference in your horse's life.

Because your horse only lives once, and you are the one who can make sure it's worth it!