



## HOW DOES IT WORK?: A two-minute demonstration

### Robert Cook

*[A disbelieving passer-by at a Trade Show will often pause for a moment at our booth and ask this question. Knowing that their attention span is limited, I developed the following spiel to accompany a hands-on demonstration of the bridle fitted to a mannequin of a horse's head. The demonstration part of the spiel (the explanation about steering and stopping) can be accomplished in about two minutes. It is often sufficient, by itself, to change the mind of the most hard-bitten skeptic. The full chat takes about four minutes]*

The short answer is ... **extremely well** *[smile]*. The long answer takes a couple of minutes. This bridle provides the **safest**, most **humane**, and most **effective** method of rider-to-horse communication. *[This last sentence, or something like it, might be written on a banner to attract their attention to the booth in the first instance, in which case you can save your breath]*

When the bridle is viewed from the left side of your horse *[Get the questioner to stand on this side]*, this strap that looks like a throat latch is not in fact a throat latch. It's a continuation of the rein from the right side of the head. *[Demonstrator loosens up the crossover strap under the chin with one hand and takes hold of the right rein with the other, moving the strap to and fro]* The reins cross under the chin, by means of two straps that are extensions of the reins. Place your fingers under this left crossover strap here *[[i.e. between the strap and the cheek of the horse]*. When I apply a little pressure to the right rein, as I now do, you feel a gentle squeeze. *[Questioner nods in agreement]* The horse feels this squeeze down the whole of the left side of its head, from the poll, down the face, across the nose, and under the chin *[Demonstrator, as he talks, indicates this half of the head with his hand]*. So what you are doing when steering your horse to the right, instead of pulling on its mouth (which your horse **dislikes**) *[Demonstrator sticks his finger in his own mouth and yanks on his lips]* you are gently nudging the left side of its head (which he **loves**) *[Demonstrator places the flat of his hand against his own cheek and pushes his head sideways]*. Horses respond better to being pushed than pulled. So you communicate with your horse **painlessly** and the horse steers more willingly. Your horse also moves its head in a more natural manner, keeping its head upright, without any of the tilting that the bit tends to cause *[Demonstrator can use the palm of his hand, held upright and with thumb on top, to simulate the horse's head and its movement]*. .

Not only does your horse **steer better** in the Bitless Bridle but it also **stops better**. By removing the bit and eliminating pain, the 'brakes' are much, much better. Horses run from pain. A rider is **less** likely to be runaway with **if** they remove the bit from the mouth. With gentle pressure on both reins, the rider now hugs the whole of the head. A horse behaves a little like a babe-in-arms. If you hug a baby it grows calm and relaxes. Your

horse responds in a similar fashion to the bridle's **whole-head-hug**. The horse interprets this hug as a polite and painless request from the rider, "Please, I would like to stop." Whatever the mechanism, the bridle seems to generate a 'submit' response. In conjunction with appropriate additional signals from seat, legs, breathing and balance, your horse will slow and stop. So if you have a horse that bolts, pulls, rushes its fences, or jigs on the trail when you want to walk, this bridle will solve these problems and many, many other problems too.

*[Your two minutes may now be up. But by this time you have finished the demonstration and probably captured the attention of the questioner. This is often a good moment to ask the questioner what sort of riding they do and what problems they have. The rest of the story below can be blended into your responses to their answers]*

Most riders, if asked to compile a list of the problems that comprise the syndrome '**aversion to the bit**' will have no difficulty in naming at least six such problems. Experienced trainers might add an additional six. But my research tells me that the bit is responsible for **over a hundred problems** *[By way of back-up, a three page list of these problems can be made available for skeptics to scan]*. These problems make life difficult and dangerous for both horse and rider *[A single sheet handout can be provided on "The Benefits of the Bitless Bridle"]*

Of course, not every horse will exhibit all 100 problems but many a horse has been shown to exhibit 30 or 40. When the bit is removed the majority of these problems are solved and the problems disappear. So the Bitless Bridle 'works' in ways other than by simply providing effective steering and stopping. It makes riding **simpler, safer and more satisfying**.

The bit method of communication is like a radio signal with a huge amount of 'noise.' Because this 'noise' is painful, the horse cannot 'hear' what the rider wants. The horse interprets a painful message in a manner entirely different from the rider's intentions. If a horse is hurting it will not be either attentive, obedient, or cooperative. The bit makes exercise painful and aggravating for the horse; and makes riding frustrating and fearful for the rider. With the Bitless Bridle method of communication there is no 'noise,' the horse 'listens,' and instead of an adversarial relationship existing between horse and rider, a harmonious partnership develops.

The bridle also 'works' **by enabling the horse to breathe** freely without the obstructions to breathing caused by the bit. As the horse gets more oxygen it will have more energy and tire less rapidly. As breathing and striding are synchronized in the exercising horse, anything that facilitates breathing will also help **striding**. Bitless horses have a longer, smoother stride and move with better grace and rhythm ... more like a horse moves when at liberty in the field. A longer stride is a faster stride, so bitless horses walk and trot faster. They also jump more willingly and **improve their performance** in every other discipline.

Finally, the Bitless Bridle 'works' by improving the **welfare** of both horse and rider. Accidents are less likely and both you and your horse are **happier**. Buy a bridle now and if, in a month's time you don't feel that it has changed your life for the better, we give you your money back. You have nothing to lose and a great deal to gain. ... Any questions?