

SPECIAL REPORT

5 TIPS TO DEMOLISH RIDER FEAR

Jane Savoie

1. THE LAW OF ATTRACTION. (LOA)

Recently, there's been a lot of buzz about the movie, *The Secret*. *The Secret* is all about the Law of Attraction. This law is as universal as the law of gravity. Basically, the Law of Attraction states that we will attract into our experience that with which we are in vibrational resonance.

Some of you might feel that the Law of Attraction is a little too “woo-woo” for you. But there is real science behind this law. Specifically, I'm talking about quantum physics. Don't panic because quantum physics sounds complicated. I'm simply talking about energy.

We're all energy. You, your horse, your saddle, and even your thoughts and feelings (including those feelings of fear!) are all energy. That's because everything is made up of molecules, which are made up of atoms, which are made up of subatomic particles, which are pure energy.

All energy vibrates at a certain frequency. When something vibrates at a certain frequency, it naturally resonates with and attracts back to it things with the same vibration—sort of like a magnet.

I'm sure you've heard the expression “like attracts like”. When your thoughts and emotions are about fear, anxiety, or tension, you literally draw those things to you like a magnet.

So, if you're afraid that your horse will bolt off with you, you attract circumstances, people, and events that contribute to bolting. If you're afraid he's going to shy at the judge's booth, you create a situation (like hanging anxiously onto his mouth and transmitting your tension, the judge suddenly standing up, or the tests sheets blowing off the table) that spooks your horse.

I'm sure the first question you have, then, is “How do I change the frequency of my vibrations?” It's actually quite simple. Use visualization to create a mental movie of what you want.

Visualize you and your horse feeling calm and in control. As you create your mental image, make sure to:

1. Add emotion. (This is the most important part!) Remember a time when you felt confident and brave, and really get into experiencing that emotion during your mental movie.

2. Fill in details. Make your image very vivid by “seeing” what you're wearing, what your horse looks like, where you're riding, and what kind of day it is.

3. Involve your senses. “See” your horse’s ears flopping to the side in a relaxed way. “Hear” his rhythmic breathing. “Smell” the fly spray. “Feel” your seat firmly in contact with the saddle.

It’s actually a pretty simple process. But let’s say you’re working on visualizing how you want to feel and how you want your horse to behave in a particular situation, and this little niggling voice inside you says, “Who are you kidding? You know you’re the gutless wonder. Your horse is gonna spin and bolt, and you’ll probably get dumped.”

If that’s how you feel, it simply means you’re dealing with some major blocks or resistance to feeling relaxed, brave, and confident. This leads me to the next step, which is to use the Emotional Freedom Technique to clear out those blocks. You’ll find that when you combine the Law of Attraction with the Emotional Freedom Technique, you’ll become virtually unstoppable!

2. THE EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE (EFT)

The Emotional Freedom Technique is an energy therapy invented by Gary Craig. The discovery statement for EFT is as follows:

THE CAUSE OF ALL NEGATIVE EMOTION IS A DISRUPTION IN THE BODY’S ENERGY.

With EFT, you rebalance your energy and, therefore, clear out negative emotions including the blocks I mentioned in the last section. You’ll bring your fear and your blocks to the surface, and clear them out. The following is a simplified version of the process.

To clear out your fear or the blocks to clearing your fear, you’ll tap on the endpoints of certain acupuncture meridians while repeating a reminder phrase that keeps you focused on your problem. (i.e. “this fear”, “this doubt that I can’t overcome my fear”)

When you tap, use two or three fingers of your dominant hand, and tap 7–10 times. Tap each point firmly enough to get a little bounce.

The eight points we’ll be using in this simplified version are as follows:

1. Eyebrow point—Tap where the inside edge of your eyebrow and the bridge of your nose meet.
2. Side of the Eye—Tap on the outside of the eye on the eye socket.
3. Under the Eye—Tap on the eye socket directly under your pupil.
4. Under the Nose—Tap under your nose and above your upper lip.
5. Under Lower Lip—Tap under your lower lip on the crease between your lip and chin.
6. Collarbone—Tap underneath your collarbone one inch to the side of the little indentation at the bottom of your throat.
7. Under Arm—Tap on your side about 4 inches below your armpit.
8. Top of Head—Tap on the crown of your head. Make a small circle about 2 inches in diameter.

Let's use fear of getting bucked off as our example. Here are the steps:

1. Rate your fear on a scale of 0–10. Zero means you feel neutral or that there is no emotional charge when you think of getting bucked off. Ten means you're so panicked that you're immobilized.

2. Repeat a set-up phrase **3 times** while you tap continuously on the karate chop point. The karate chop point is on the outside of your hand. (Tap where you'd use your hand if you were going to break boards with a karate chop.)

The set-up phrase is:

“Even though I have this fear of getting bucked off, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”

3. Repeat the negative reminder phrase (i.e. “this fear”) every time you tap 7–10 times on each of the eight points.

4. Take a deep breath.

5. Rate your fear again a scale of 0–10.

The whole process will take about 30 seconds. Let's say that after one round of tapping, your fear of getting bucked off has subsided from a 9 to a 7. Do the process again, but add the word “still” to the set-up phrase and the word “remaining” to the reminder phrase.

For example:

1. Tap continuously on the karate chop point as you repeat this phrase **3 times**,

“Even though I **STILL** have some fear of getting bucked off, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”

2. Tap 7–10 times on each of the eight points as you repeat the following reminder phrase. “This **REMAINING** fear.”

3. Take a deep breath.

4. Rate your fear again a scale of 0–10.

Go through the process as many times as you need to get your fear to a 1 or a zero.

Occasionally, you'll find that your fear stays the same or even gets higher. That is, your fear of getting bucked off seems to have gone from

a 9 to a 10. If that happens, it simply means that there are different ASPECTS to your fear that you also need to clear with this tapping technique.

Examples of different aspects are:

1. Fear of landing badly and breaking your leg.
2. Fear that your loose horse will run around wildly, slip, fall, and hurt himself.
3. Fear of being bruised and sore.
4. Fear that you'll be out of work and the bills will pile up.
5. Fear you'll be embarrassed in front of your friends
6. Fear that if your young horse bucks you off once, he'll think it's a good idea, and he'll start bucking more violently.

(If you want to learn more about EFT, I suggest you go to Gary's web site, which is www.emofree.com. Before using the EFT technique on yourself or others, you must read this:

DISCLAIMER: EFT is gentle and easy to use, and has to date yielded remarkable results for relieving emotional and physical distress. While there have been no distressing side effects reported to my knowledge, this does not mean that you will not discover side effects for yourself. IF YOU INTEND TO USE THESE TECHNIQUES, YOU MUST AGREE TO TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS WHILE APPLYING THESE TECHNIQUES. You may wish to consult a trained EFT practitioner. If you decide to apply these techniques, you are agreeing to take full responsibility for yourself and others when applying the EFT technique, and shall neither hold Gary Craig, myself nor anyone else associated with EFT responsible for any adverse side effects or outcomes.)

3. BREATHE

When you're afraid, your breathing becomes rapid and shallow, and you might even find that you hold your breath. You can be sure that if you do this, you'll transfer your tension to your horse. Deep breathing is one of the best and simplest fear busters you can use.

Practice deep breathing by doing the following: As you inhale through your nose, feel like you're breathing way down into your stomach. As you inhale, put your hand on your stomach, and feel it expand. You should feel like your tummy is getting "fat" because you're lowering your diaphragm. Be sure to keep your shoulders down as you inhale. Otherwise, you're actually just breathing shallowly in your upper chest. Inhale for a slow count of five.

As you exhale through your mouth, feel your seat lowering into the saddle so that you sink down into your horse's body. As you exhale, feel

like you're sewing your rib cage together or like you're pulling your navel into your spine. Exhale for a slow count of five also.

Consciously breathe like this when you first get on and during every break. Make it one of your goals to take a deep breath in every single corner.

Here are some fun images you can use to make deep breathing even more effective. As you inhale, imagine breathing in positive thoughts and images. As you exhale, expel all the fear from your mind and body. Here are some examples to get you started:

Inhale gratitude. Exhale worry.
Inhale joy. Exhale anxiety.
Inhale peace. Exhale terror.
Inhale relaxation. Exhale tension.
Inhale confidence. Exhale fear.

4. CHANGE THE SOFTWARE IN YOUR MENTAL COMPUTER

One of the biggest mistakes that we make when we're trying to change the way we feel is that we direct our energy toward the conscious mind. You know—willpower, iron-jawed determination. The problem with that strategy is that you can only make short-term, temporary changes when you direct your efforts to your conscious mind. To make permanent changes, direct your efforts to the part of your brain that truly determines your actions—your subconscious mind.

You see, your subconscious mind believes everything you say and imagine, sees it as the goal and tries to make it come true. It's just waiting for your instructions. So, like a guided missile, it'll keep you on the course you've set for it. And you alone are responsible for charting that course by what you see in your mind's eye and by what you claim you want.

When I think about changing mental software, I'm reminded of Albert Einstein's definition of insanity. He says, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result". If you're a fearful or timid rider, you've probably been beating yourself up about it for a very long time. The software in your mental computer says you're a chicken so you're going to feel like a chicken. So, if you want to demolish fear, the only way you can change the way you feel is to reprogram your mind by installing new software in your mental computer.

The bonus of changing your mental software rather than using will power or iron-jawed determination is that it's a lot easier to do and the results are permanent. All you have to do are two simple things. Reprogram your mind through visualization and self-talk.

Here's all you need to know about visualization:

1. Relax. (Take 3 deep breaths.)
2. Fill in details. (What are you wearing? What does your horse look like? What do your surroundings look like?)
3. Use your five senses. (Feel the contact with your horse's mouth. Smell the clean, fresh air. Hear the rhythm of your horse's gaits. See the ring where you're riding. Taste the salt from the sweat dripping down from your protective headgear!)
4. Use emotion. (Fully experience being brave, confident, and relaxed. To help you do this, just remember another time in your life when you actually felt that way.)
5. Repeat daily. (It takes about 21 days to develop a habit.)

Here's all you need to know about self-talk. Always speak to yourself in the following way:

1. Use the present tense as if you already possess the quality you want. (*am* confident, courageous, or calm.)
2. Use a positive phrase. ("I am relaxed" as opposed to "I am not tense." There is no picture in the mind for the word "not". So when you say, "I am not tense, your mind only hears, "I am tense.")

5. A POSITIVE LOOK AT FEAR

Change your attitude toward fear. Fear means you're growing. Every time you stretch yourself, aim a little higher, or take a risk, you're going to experience some anxiety. So fear itself is not the issue. Fear doesn't make you a coward. There's nothing wrong with being afraid. Fear only becomes an issue when it paralyzes you and prevents you from doing something you really want to do. Besides, if you're not afraid at times, it just means that you're not stepping out of your comfort zone and living big enough.

So, rather than interpreting fear as a signal to retreat, think of it as a cue to take action. If fear goes hand in hand with growth, why would you want to avoid it completely? Instead, think of fear as a sign of your development and look at it as a companion that accompanies you on all your exciting adventures.

Once you take action, you'll find that action cures fear. You see, you might think you're safe if you stay in your comfort zone. But refusing to push through your fears actually leaves you with a greater sense of dread because your fear grows into an unmanageable monster.

So, take a small risk every day. That's not to say that you should take foolish chances. Always make sure you're well prepared for the task at hand. But taking a well-thought out risk will make you feel great. And even if it doesn't work out, at least you've made an effort. You're not sitting back powerless and immobilized by your fears.

In the last section, I explained how your subconscious mind is just waiting for your instructions. One of the fascinating things about this process is that the subconscious is nonjudgmental. It doesn't care if the goal you give it is positive or negative. It just moves you relentlessly toward what it thinks you want. Like the genie in the bottle, your subconscious mind says, "Your wish is my command."

For example, if you repeatedly say, "My horse isn't ready to compete, and this show is probably going to be a disaster." Or "I'm a basket case when I compete and can't sleep the night before." or "I'm afraid my horse will have a mental 'meltdown' if I ask for more collection." the words "disaster", "basket case", and "meltdown" become the goals.

Or let's say you keep your fears to yourself and don't verbalize them. BUT you're gifted with an extremely vivid imagination. You can picture potential disaster in great detail like the rider who told me she had a very distinct mental image of what would happen when she asked her young horse to canter. She clearly "saw" him launching her into the air where she did a perfect full twisting somersault before landing unceremoniously flat on her back in the dirt!

What can you do to prevent an image like that from becoming your goal? First, when you find yourself picturing something horrible, do some thought stopping. There are all kinds of ways to do this so choose a method that's easiest for you. For instance, try saying the word, "Clear" or "Quit!" to quiet your mind and erase the negative pictures. Or picture the thing you fear the most, and then draw a big, black X through it.

Or try this. Go out and have a look at a stop sign. I mean really study it. Memorize the details—the size, shape, colors, and style of letters. Then when your mental demons plague you, superimpose that stop sign in your mind's eye over the image of whatever it is that you dread.

After you've done some thought stopping, the next step is to reprogram your mental computer through self-talk and imaging.

Find buzzwords that empower you. One of my students froze every time she thought her horse was going to wheel around and take off in the opposite direction. Her catch phrase became, "Take charge." and that mobilized her. Another rider who tended to be too conservative in competition used the phrase, "I'm a risk-taker."

Or consider the fact that if you truly believed that you could handle anything, you'd have nothing to fear. So, your motto becomes, "Feel the fear and do it anyway." or "So what if my horse bolts. I can handle it!" (By the way, it's not a runaway unless you try to stop!)

As far as imaging goes, I'm a great advocate of visualizing the ideal scenario because I believe that perfect practice makes perfect. However, if you find it difficult to do "perfect practice", do some coping rehearsal instead.

For instance, let's say it's early spring and you're getting ready for the first competition of the season. You've been preparing diligently all winter and you're psyched. As you tend to all the last minute organizational details, you reflect about how much fun it will be to take your 4 year old, chestnut thoroughbred mare to her first competition. Your sense of anticipation stays with you right up until the time that you go home, listen to the evening weather report, and hear that there's an arctic cold front blasting in overnight. The temperature is going to plummet some 30 degrees and the wind will be gusting to 45 MPH. To top it all off, your ride is at 7:45 A.M. And you think, "I'm gonna DIE!"

Rather than visualizing being catapulted into outer space, do some coping rehearsal instead. "Watch" the whole disaster unfolding. "See" it in great detail. And then continue your mental videotape until you see a successful resolution to the scenario.

For example, you take your mare off the trailer. She's dancing around and screaming hysterically to the other horses. It takes two people to hold her steady enough so that you can tack her up. As soon as you mount, you feel a hump in her back and her tail goes straight up like a flag. You piaffe out to the warm-up area (by the way, she doesn't even know how to piaffe). As you begin your warm-up, she begins to buck exuberantly. BUT THEN...You realize that during all of her antics, you're never actually unseated. (See...You can handle it!) Your breathing gets slower and deeper, and you begin to relax. After those initial exciting moments, your mare settles down to business. You proceed with your usual warm-up, go around the outside of the arena, and come down the centerline to ride the test of your life!

To learn more about how to get That Winning Feeling during every ride, go to www.janesavoie.com. Click on the products tab and order an autographed copy of Jane's books, The Rider's Inside Edge mental training CD program, or one of the Jane's DVD training programs.

With every order, you'll receive a FREE inspirational quote card to carry in your wallet. AND...with every order over \$100, you'll also receive a FREE CD of one of Jane's live interviews.

Copyright Jane Savoie International

