

The Positive Riding System

Foreword

By Henrik Johansen



The idea behind this book is to pass on to you the experiences I have gained through many years of teaching students and training horses at all levels. My hope is to help trainers, as well as amateurs, have a better understanding of how to work with their horses. Since much of my experience has been gained by making my own mistakes, it has become a personal goal to help others avoid making those same mistakes. If I can accomplish this, then my purpose in writing this book will be fulfilled. In addition, it is my wish that a better understanding of classical dressage will enable us to educate our horses in a manner that is acceptable to them.

Today, no one can say that this is *the* way that everyone should work with horses; no one has the answer to how each and every one of us should teach or train. That is because we are all entitled to our own opinions. Furthermore, it would be boring if we all rode and taught in the same manner. So take what you feel you can use from this book – that which fits into your riding and teaching – and leave the rest.

You see, the riders and trainers who really succeed are those who have the courage and ability to develop a system and a philosophy that is uniquely theirs. It is important that we come to our own conclusions, and believe in our own methods. At the same time, it is im-

portant to keep our eyes and ears open, so that we can continually pick up inspiration and ideas from others.

We cannot really understand a movement until we have felt it executed correctly. Regardless of how many words we hear as students or use as teachers, to be successful, these words must lead us to an experience: the feeling of the horse responding correctly. No one can describe such a feeling with words. Try to explain to someone how a banana tastes, or how it feels to ride a bicycle – impossible, isn't it? One has to taste the banana first; one has to have tried to balance on a bicycle before knowing the feeling.

It is also very important to have an overview. To get this you have to work systematically as well as have a goal and a work plan. You have to arrive at a stage where you can simplify. You will also find some examples of how to do this in the pages that follow.

It is my hope that this book will be of some help to you; that it will provide inspiration and ideas, and that, by testing some of the theories and methods, you will find yourself in a situation where you will learn from the experience of a truly correct feeling.

Good luck – and have fun!