



## Connection and Confidence News!

*"From Winter to Spring: Setting an intention for the upcoming riding season and creating a solid plan to have you breeze through this riding year and fulfilling your goals!"*

*April 2015*

### New and Newsworthy!

(Total read time <2 minutes)

- **New Email.** Please use [CoachAnke@gmail.com](mailto:CoachAnke@gmail.com) if you are trying to reach me. Since I am out of my office more than I am in, it has been easier to check correspondence using the gmail account.
- **Revised Office Hours.** Coach, coach thyself! I am working hard to not work so hard! Therefore on Sundays and Tuesdays, my office is closed, although you still may find me horsing around! Because I am out of the office much of the time, I do my best to respond to your questions within 24-48 hours during business days. If you need more immediate assistance, do not hesitate to contact my office manager at [Connected203@gmail.com](mailto:Connected203@gmail.com).
- **Find Your Balance in the Saddle!**
  - Enjoy the amazing personal experience of being balanced in the saddle on "Woody", my trusty truly bomb proof saddle stand! Sign up for your personalized experience at the Midwest Horse Fair in Madison WI April 17-19. Spaces are limited.
  - Here's what one person had to say about their balancing experience:

*"I honestly didn't think I'd get much out of the balancing; I'm a good rider and feel very solid in the saddle. I ride bareback and feel my balance is really good. The changes that Anke "invited" me to make while being balanced were truly eye opening! I've been able to take it to my own horse and the changes that I see in my mare are really remarkable. She's moving easier and we have even better communication than before. And the stability in the saddle has increased for me even more...amazing to feel what you don't know you can feel!"*

Sue R. and "Sunny", Madison WI

## Transition into Spring: Setting an Intention for the Upcoming Riding Season

*(Total read time <2 minutes)*

Light bulb moment! Last week, I had a lesson with one of the Connected Groundwork and Riding Instructor's, Debbie Davies. We began with the intention of working on lateral work, which we did in a very roundabout way! This is what I love so much about learning and teaching, whatever you set out to do can radically change based on which horse and rider show up. Sometimes, we have to abandon the original plan and fill in the holes in our foundation in to move forward. I relate this concept to "*Swiss cheese*" because there may be some holes in what you thought was a solid cheese block! The good news is that by filling in these holes, you gain additional tools to put into your toolbox. Your foundation of "cheese" becomes very strong and sturdy! Enjoy "filling the holes in your Swiss cheese", enjoy the lightbulb moments, and have fun leading the dance with your horse!



## Preparing for Better Transitions on the Ground: Shoulder Press

(  
*Total read time <5 minutes)*

The subtleties of the Connected Groundwork® exercises continue to amaze me. The results can be profound when you support and bring attention to an area where the horse may have a holding or bracing pattern, or may just need some additional support. Shoulder press is one of these exercises, especially for a horse that tends to be stiff in the ribcage and has tightness in his shoulders and the base of the neck.

Shoulder press helps the horse overcome habitual bracing patterns that lead to one sidedness and crookedness. The horse needs to be able to easily yield his *inside* shoulder by shifting weight to the *outside*, allowing for bend through his body. This bend creates a slight arc from nose to tail, which frees the inside hind leg to come further under the horse ("coming through"). Shoulder press also helps the horse balance and shift weight more efficiently during transitions.



Shoulder Press

By doing Shoulder Press on the ground prior to your ride, you'll free up your horse's neck, shoulder, and rib cage and will be able to move with more ease and less restriction...something we all need for better transitions!

You should look for signs of relaxation from your horse when doing Shoulder Press, indicating that your horse's nervous system is accepting the information you are giving him. Your horse may lower his head and his body may become softer and more pliable under your hand. It may take very little pressure to cause him to shift his weight away from your hand (on the inside shoulder) to the outside leg. These are all signs of releasing.

If your horse raises his head, braces into your hand or you don't feel a "give" under your hand, or backs away from the exercise, he is not

participating in the exercise. Try to change one of three things, but only try ONE thing at a time:

- **Your Pressure:** Are you "pushing" on your horse? If he shifting his weight over to the offside shoulder and then rocking back to the near side shoulder, your pressure sounds good. If he's bracing against your hand, then ease off the pressure and find that place where he participates by moving with you instead of against you.
- **Your Speed:** Press and count 1-2-3-4, then slowly release 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. You may need to slow down the entire process and make sure that your horse "stays with you" during the exercise.
- **Your Own Body Posture:** Make sure you are in a neutral posture with a released back, a straight wrist and a "soft" fist on his shoulder. "Breathing into your back" can help bring awareness to any tension that you may be holding in your upper body and will help release that tension with a few mindful breaths.

Once you've completed the exercise, take your horse for a connected walk and see if his walking rhythm hasn't improved. If his connection with you is just a bit better...then of course, enjoy the ride!

## Coaching Corner

### Taking What You Learn "On the Mat" Into the Ride of Your Life

*(Total read time <3 minutes)*



Yoga with Anke

To me, transitions are all about creating flow from one movement to the next. Many of you know that I enjoy and do yoga as often as I can. It allows me to rejuvenate from within and do the best that I can, in that moment. There is no pressure, except for the pressure that I put on myself, and when I am on the mat I limit that tremendously!

In order for my transitions in yoga to be successful, I have to be mindful of the past, present, and the future. The past represents what I have learned from previous experiences. The present represents my success in that moment, which depends on how well I am focused and checked in. The future represents my intention of what I wish to happen. Most of all though, yoga, to me, is all about fun, being "light" with myself, and enjoying the journey.

I really enjoy doing arm balancing and it's taken me about a year to be able to do some of the arm balances that I share in the video. I could be critical of them, but why? I enjoy doing them, they rejuvenate my body and mind, and heck, they are fun! I know that many people do them better and that some are unable to do them at all. For me, to be successful in a balance posture, it requires me to move into the flow with a good transition. Before I was able to balance, I had to figure out how to *transition* into the balance.

Many times, the transition was about the MENTAL component much more than the physical component. True, I had to physically be prepared, but I am not the most flexible person and my hips and shoulders are, dare I say, somewhat restricted. If I MENTALLY prepared for the transition, I tended not to end up falling on my head.

Enjoy the video. I had fun making it impromptu with my fabulous yoga instructor. Most of all, I wish you the gift of mentally transitioning into whatever you wish to accomplish. Namaste.

## A Quick "Curry" from Amy Pikalek



(Total time <2 minutes)

Now that spring is here, it is the perfect time to take out the garbage. I don't just mean hauling the big recycling bin to the curb-though that's always a good idea. What I mean is - it is the perfect time to do some energetic clearing. Much like the changing weather encourages many of us to spend time each spring clearing our house of unwanted debris, so too can you view this time of year as a chance to get rid of unwanted physical/mental ailments and habits. How can you do this? It's easy! As a Reiki professional, I see how a simple change in thought can have dramatic effects on the outcome of a future situation.

Start fresh by thinking positively and imagining what you most desire. The Reiki precepts teach us to be constantly grateful for all we have received and learned throughout our lives. We learn that we will continually be provided for and, as a result, our positive thoughts will magnetically attract positive energy to us. If you dwell on what important figures in your life did not provide, you will continue to create unhealthy energy blockages for yourself, drawing more negative energy and imbalance to you. However, if you focus on the important things you have received from your parents, teachers, elders, and other influencers in your life, the energy around is focused on happiness and joy, creating a clearer pathway for more positive, healthy things to come your way.

Therefore, clearing out the clutter enables you to focus on the life you want. Living in the present. Imagine the life you want now and focus on how that looks, feels and what it involves. Once you focus on what you want, you will actually be able to see it when it appears in your life (or perhaps it has been there all along)! Creating this kind of positive energy will actually allow you to attract to you the things you want and desire.

Happy cleaning!

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**Amy J. Pikalek** is a Reiki master, specializing in animal Reiki. As owner of Hikari Natural Healing, her goal is to help animals and their people by providing non-invasive natural healing in person and at a distance. She sees clients in person from all over Dane County, Wisconsin and assists animals from all over the country via distant healing. For more information visit [www.hikarihealing.com](http://www.hikarihealing.com). Amy is offering a 20% off energetic spring cleaning for the month of April. Prices are \$28 for a 30 minutes session and \$60 for a 60 minute session, in person if you live in Dane County or a distance session if outside Dane County

. Please contact Amy at  
hikarihealing@yahoo.com  
or at 608-886-8778.

## From the Horse's Mouth

*"The only constant is change. The only freedom is movement."*  
- Peggy Cummings

### Upcoming Events!

#### 2015

- **Midwest Horse Fair**, April 17, 18, 19 2015 Madison WI. Booth #5010 in the Exhibition Hall-Mendota Atrium. Look for our banner "For Riders Who Want More!" Balancing riders in the saddle to experience a neutral seat!
- **Horse-O-Rama**, May 2 & 3, Manitowoc County Expo, WI
- **Connected Groundwork and Riding 1 Clinic**, May 30 & 31,

KarMik Acres, Woodstock, IL

- **Connected Groundwork and Riding 2 Clinic**, June 6 & 7, Snapdragon Farm and Stables, Mt Horeb, WI
- **Connected Ground and Riding 1 Clinic**, June 27 & 28, Snapdragon Farm and Stables, Mt Horeb, WI
- **Connected Groundwork and Riding Lesson Days**, July 11 & 12, Snapdragon Farm and Stables, Mt Horeb, WI
- Funny true life stories and a "kick back and have an adult beverage" kind of attitude at my blog **Why I Ride Horses!** Please come and visit and leave a comment or two!

## Contact Information

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