



The Evolving Equestrian
Evolve Challenge
 For Starters Lesson 7

-Systematic Desensitization

Systematic desensitization is the gradual exposure to a scary stimulus, while keeping the learner below fear threshold.

Introduce the stimulus at a level the horse is comfortable with and slowly build from there.

1. Distance
2. Intensity
3. Duration

-Flooding

Flooding is overwhelming the learner with a scary stimulus. The learner is unable to escape.

-Fear Threshold

Fear Threshold is the point at which the horse cannot handle anymore, when the fight or flight response is triggered.

Two people suffering from mild fear of water are learning to swim

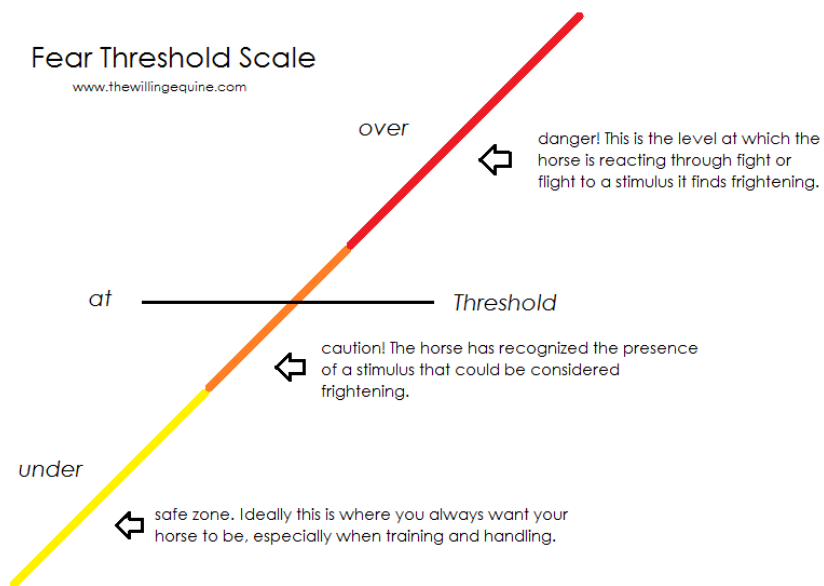
In your opinion:

- a) Which learner is most likely to avoid future swimming lessons?
- b) Which learner is most likely to become even more phobic of water?
- c) Which learner is most likely to dislike his teacher?
- d) Which learner would have higher level of anxiety?
- e) Which learner is more likely to injure himself or other during the process?
- f) If it was you, which learner would you rather be?

how are you feeling? you are doing great

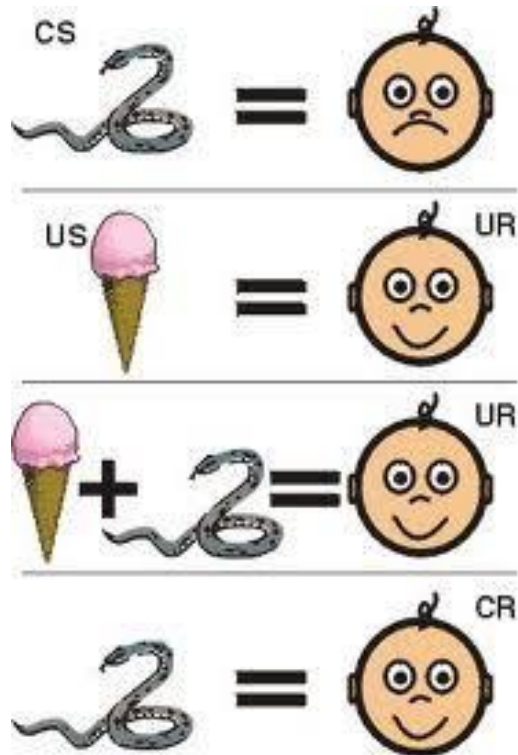
don't be silly its just water

Fear Threshold Scale
www.thewillingequine.com



-Counter Conditioning

Counter conditioning is the process by which negative associations with a conditioned stimulus can be changed to a positive one through pairing it with an unconditioned stimulus.



Through counter conditioning we can change the way our horse's feel about something they once found scary or unpleasant. It is much like classical conditioning, only instead of conditioning a response to a neutral stimulus, we are conditioning a new response to a stimulus the horse does not like.

Nobody likes being bothered by summer flies.

But some of us are scared of the hissy sprayer!

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We can fix this with the **POWER OF BISCUITS!!!**

Start by spraying AWAY from your pony at a distance they feel comfortable with. Click and treat frequently when your pony is relaxed.

SLOWLY move closer to your pony. It is vital you do not rush! Let them build confidence slowly. Lots of clicks and rewards!

Eventually, you will be close enough to slowly introduce the spray to your pony's coat. Take your time and keep a high rate of reinforcement until your pony is totally comfortable.

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