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## A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

# Make Training Methods Your Own

People may try to take credit for using Tom Dorrance's or Ray Hunt's training methods, but according to Idaho horseman Martin Black, they truly can't. He points out that only Tom Dorrance can be Tom Dorrance.

"Although I learned a lot from Tom, I won't take credit for applying his methods," says Black. "I use Martin Black's methods, and I always tell people that I don't want Tom, Ray or anybody else to take credit for my mistakes."

Black's self-effacing attitude reflects the esteem he holds for the industry's top horsemen and contributes to the respect other aspiring riders accord Black. Horsemen also appreciate his innovative use of the "A" pen (featured in the February 2007 issue) for working cattle and training horses.

Here, Black shares some personal perspectives on horsemen, horsemanship and horses.

**What training book, video or DVD has left a lasting impression on you?**

That's hard to answer, because I think training takes a combination of information. People seem to get into trouble with horses by trying to be just like Tom Dorrance or Ray Hunt, instead of being themselves and adapting that information to their ways.

Readers need to realize that it doesn't matter what you read or watch on the screen. If it doesn't line up with what the horse is telling you, you're going to have trouble. It all boils down to having horse experience before the information can do you any good.

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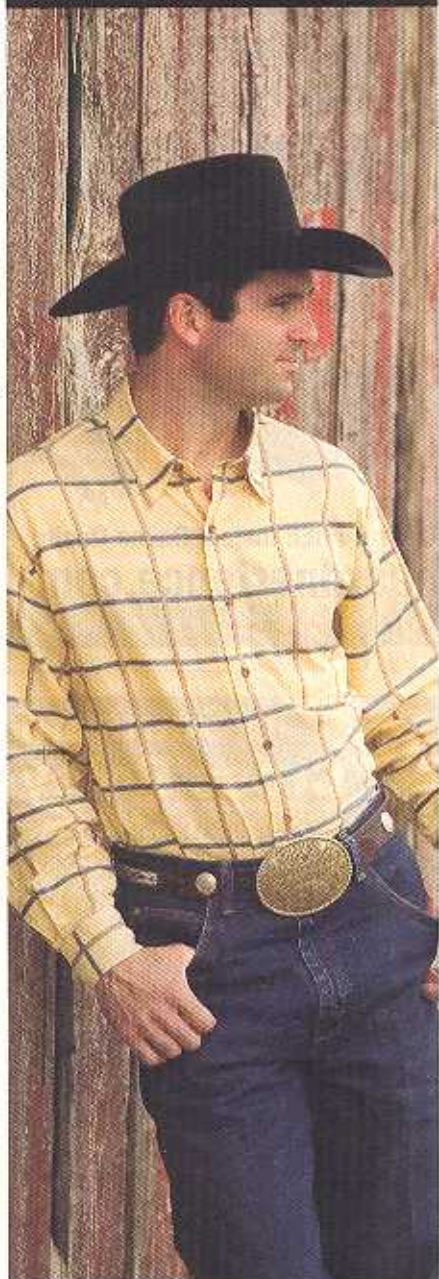
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FAMILY KITCHING

ously I made a mistake, but maybe the next day I'll find that satisfaction again.

Whether a horse doesn't know me at all, or has had bad experiences and is expecting the worst, the more I can build his confidence, the more satisfying the experience is to me. I'm satisfied as long as I can be successful doing that.

**Is there a really memorable horse that you'd like to clone and have a half-dozen like him in your pasture?**

Two horses, full brothers about 10 years apart, were exceptional performance horses and great using horses, the kind I'd like to have a pasture full of. They were out of a Thoroughbred mare and Quarter Horse stud. I showed them in reined cow-horse events, and the kids used them for roping and cutting. The second horse, who came along when the kids were older and in high school rodeo, also won about \$25,000 in cow-horse events. He never went to big shows or got very far from home, but was pretty dominating wherever he went.

Both horses were bred to be cow horses, and that's the only job they knew. They kind of had ranch-horse dispositions; they could take you or leave you. But when it came down to doing a job, they were all business, and they both were fun to ride.

People asked how I trained them, but I really didn't. I just rode them because I didn't know enough to teach them how to do all those things they did. I just stayed out of the way. That's a real basis in my training—give the horse a job to do, let him figure out how to do it and stay out of his way.

Most horses are smart enough to figure out things, and those two brothers were exceptionally smart, athletic and willing. They had all the ingredients to be special.

For Martin Black's current clinic schedule, or to order Working Cattle in the "A" Pen, visit [martinblack.net](http://martinblack.net).

That said, the first books I read on horsemanship that made a big impression were *Hackamore Reinsman* and *Reinsman of the West*, both by Ed Connell. His books explain a lot about the hackamore that isn't explained in very many places. They're good books to have because of the scarce information in them.

Joe Wolter, Bryan Neubert and Buck Brannaman are some people that I could endorse as having good books and videos. I don't care about video quality so much, as long as the information is solid, and those guys are really there for the horse. That's horsemanship.

**Describe one moment with a horse that's brought you a real sense of satisfaction.**

I get a sense of satisfaction, if not on a daily basis, almost weekly because I work large numbers of horses and start a lot of colts. Working with any horse the first time is a new frontier, and seeing how far and how quickly I can develop each horse is satisfying.

I often achieve that in some way every day. Sometimes, I'm not happy with the way things ended, and obvi-