

# MAKE LEARNING FUN!

Photograph © Catherine Slade [www.caslade.co.uk](http://www.caslade.co.uk)

## What's fun for one isn't necessarily fun for all. Vicki Jayne Maris explains how to find your own style

**A**ctivities that are enjoyable, rewarding and fun will motivate you and your horse to want to do more. Part of motivation is recognising that there are many types of intelligence. Two legs or four, each have a preferred learning style. When exposed to training or education that only recognises certain types of intelligence it is restrictive for individuals outside of these learning styles, getting lost, confused and even switched off. How we learn is a fascinating topic which I was very lucky to learn about when I worked for Coventry University. We developed a pioneering approach to learning in which the students recognised their preferred learning styles, chose what they wanted to learn, how and against which assessment standards.

Empowerment of the learner is king. Learning styles apply to us and our horses. Individually we each have preferred learning styles. This, along with tapping into intrinsic motivation, unlocks potential and enables us to achieve our dreams.

Have you considered how you and your horse could get more out of learning? How you can set agendas in learning? How to empower your learning? For many of us our experiences of education have been modelled on the traditional formula, which is mostly lead by the teacher who sets the agenda, pace and selects the delivery style of the teaching. That's all fine if it matches your horse's and your learning styles, but having lessons with a trainer who teaches to your preferred learning styles is only one aspect of the wide range of

learning opportunities we can tap into.

You can take control of learning, you can decide what and how you want to learn. Knowing your and your horse's preferred learning styles can really help in getting the most from learning. For horses and humans there has been a lot of work undertaken in this area and it is worth taking time to explore it for yourself and your horse.

Many natural horsemanship practitioners have studied learning styles in horses in detail and produced excellent resources for horse owners to use. These are mostly based on training by temperament. This is tapping into the behavioural psychology of the horse; to match training to an individual horse personality and motivational drivers. For me horsemanship must factor

in a horse's learning style to unlock motivation. One article can never do justice to such a huge topic but there are many excellent resources available. Here are just two suggestions:

Is Your Horse a Rock Star – by Dessa Hockley. You can take a free online Horse Personality Test on this link [www.horsepersonality.com/quiz.html](http://www.horsepersonality.com/quiz.html)

What Horses Reveal by Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling.

Knowing your horse's learning style is 50% of the picture. The other 50% is knowing your preferred learning style.

There are many theories about how people learn. There is lots of free, detailed information on learning styles available on the internet and in libraries. Most theories cover three aspects of how people learn:

1. Perceiving information.
2. Processing information.
3. Organising, using and presenting information.

## Activists like to have a go and get stuck in



### PERCEIVING INFORMATION

This is how we gather information. We use all our senses, however we all have personal preferences. We use some or all of the following:

**Visual (sight).** Visual learners use visualisation such as pictures, maps and diagrams to interpret information.

**Auditory (hearing).** If you find taking in information using hearing is your preferred method you will find discussion and debate useful with your learning.

**Reading and writing.** Some people learn best by reading and writing.

**Kinaesthetic (includes touch and movement).** If you learn best by touch and movement you need to learn by physically engaging into a task. You learn by a hands on approach, doing the task and by feeling what it's like.

### PROCESSING INFORMATION

This is how we mentally process the gathered information. You will have a preference for how you process the information. There are four main preferences for processing information; activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists.

Activists like experiencing new challenges, completing tasks, problem solving, developing new ideas and concepts, competitive team work, variety, change and excitement, leading discussions, having a go and getting stuck in.

Reflectors like to observe, think and ponder. They need time to consider before taking action, they often want to

Is your horse a rock star?

find out more information and like to review what they have learned. They enjoy structured activities, analysing and comparing information.

Theorists like information presented as part of an overall system, theory or concept, to work methodically, question and probe methodology and logic. They need structured situations, a clear purpose and interesting ideas, even if they are not immediately relevant.

Pragmatists like solving real life problems, practical techniques, trying out new techniques, coaching with feedback and practical approaches.

### ORGANISING, USING AND PRESENTING INFORMATION

After you have perceived and processed the information the next stage is how you choose to share what you have learned and put it into practice. Again you will have a personal preference of how you do this. Some people choose to organise the information they have learned with either a holistic overview or with detailed logical analysis. Others prefer to present what they have learned verbally or using images.

Two legs or four, when we learn in a style that matches our preferred learning style, learning becomes logical, easy to understand and most of all fun. If something is fun we will be motivated.

[www.inspirationalhorsemanship.co.uk](http://www.inspirationalhorsemanship.co.uk)