

There's Always Room for Bending

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In Dressage *Unscrambled*, I spoke of the confluence of the LDS (Mormon) faith and green jello. Getting your horse to bend involves some jello imagery too, but in this instance, the jello that works best for people is usually red. If you're addicted enough to dressage in the first place even to be reading this, I don't need to say that bending has nothing to do with pulling on the inside rein. My advice: devote your attention to the middle of your horse and not to the part you can see in front of you—that's a good start.

Then you need to practice a food trick. An ancillary benefit is the sensuous pleasure you will derive from doing this, to say nothing of its inhibition-lowering function. But the trick is to get a generous mouthful of red jello and to hold it in one cheek. Then put the palm of your hand on that cheek and press firmly, straining the jello through your teeth into your cheek on the opposite side of your face. That's approximately how you should think of bending. Yes, you re-position the poll in the new direction, but in principle, if both ends of your horse remain anchored but you displace the middle of him laterally, you have effected a change in the bend.

It works to get from shoulder-in to renvers also, but regardless, do not put fresh pineapple in your Jello, whether green or red. Mormons know this.