

I'm inviting my horse to lower his neck, to reach into the contact, to lift his back and step under himself. The rein contact is very light, like holding a baby bird and trying not to crush it. I give the aids for half-halt, giving a little squeeze with my leg, momentarily stilling my seat, and a tiny squeeze of my hand, still trying not to crush the baby bird. One of two things seem to happen more often than what's supposed to happen: either he objects to the squeeze of the rein by coming above the bit, or he responds by going faster. I'm sure this is purely an issue of finesse: like Goldilocks, I'm searching for the aids that aren't too hard or too soft, but just right. But if you do have any advice, I'd be very glad to hear it.

Kayla

BILL-- Yes, the Goldilocks paradigm could be in play here—“this one is too hard; this one is too soft; I need to find the half halt that is *just right!*” I could be suspicious, though, that you need to approach the problem a different way. The issues (as usual) are connection and thoroughness.

It's just possible that you're trying to finesse things too much too soon. If you make your horse more solidly in front of your leg and working into the hand elastically but with a heavier elasticity, you may have more success. You don't want to allow him to lean on you, but the contact/connection you have at the moment sounds too ethereal. Without over exaggerating, apply some muscle with your driving aids, and if he wants to run through you, (remembering lateral suppling aids at the same time) make strong enough interventions until he agrees to channel the extra energy into the bit.

Try convincing him to make a more physical commitment that permits you to make more overt manipulations without him breaking apart. As you can trust him to be more connected mentally, you can diminish the size/weight of the aids you're using and end up where you want to be.