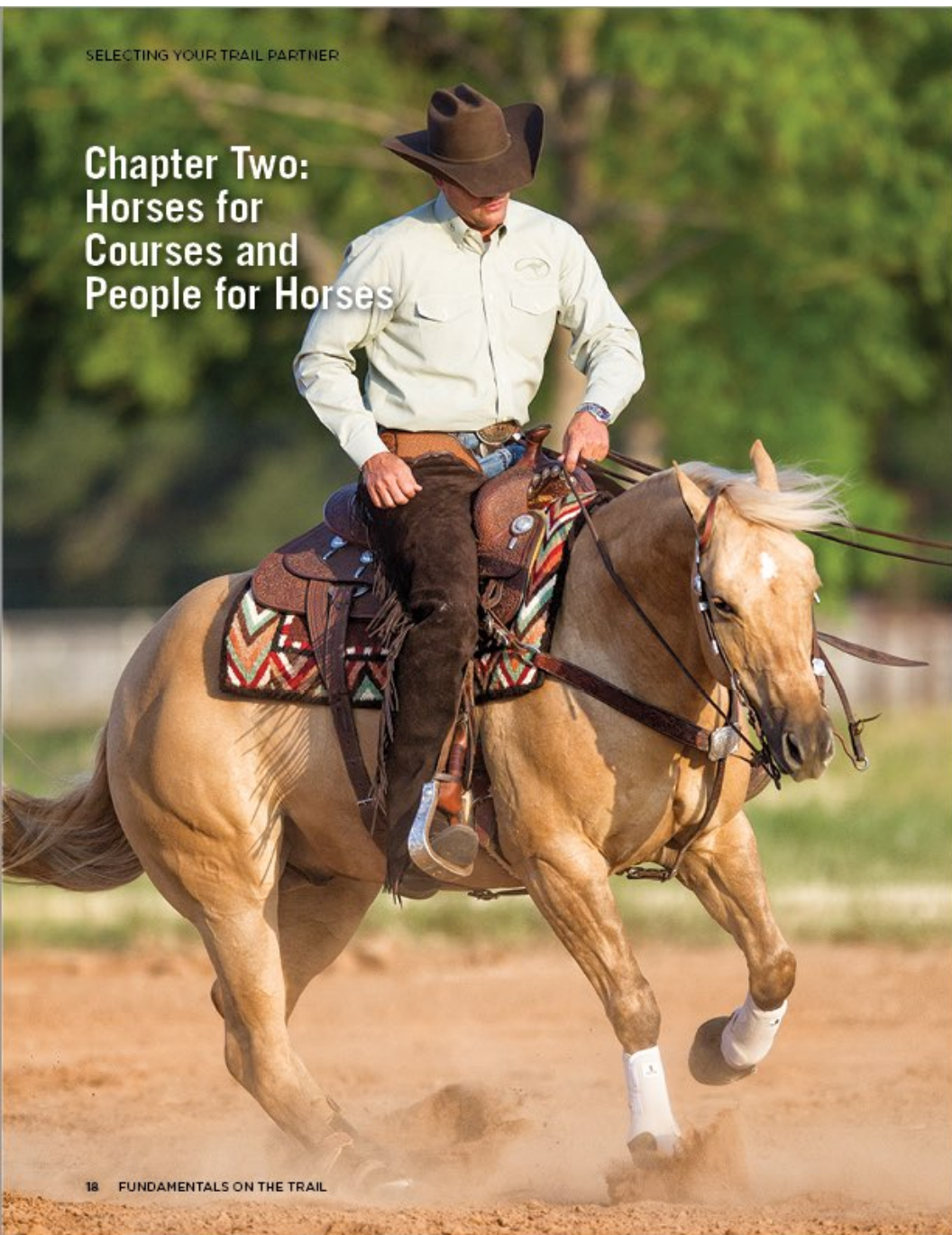


Chapter Two: Horses for Courses and People for Horses



Just like people, horses' attitudes and abilities vary from one individual to the other. Some horses are more naturally talented at a certain task than others. Sometimes the hardest thing for people to realize is that not every horse suits every course. For example, I breed reining and cow horses, but not every horse I breed wants to be a reining or cow horse. Some of them want to be barrel racers and others want to do team penning and still others want to be trail mounts. Just because a horse is bred to do a certain job doesn't mean that individual wants to do that job. Your task is to find a course that fits the horse.

Horses are a million times happier in their partnership with you and performing their jobs if they like what they're doing. A horse that loves the challenge of working cattle on a ranch probably wouldn't be well-suited at performing a dressage test. A horse that dreams of jumping fences isn't going to be happy doing a reining pattern. People are the same way. If you like crunching numbers and analyzing problems, you wouldn't be happy working on an assembly line in a factory.

Not only are some horses better suited for specific courses, but some people are better suited for specific horses. Some personalities just don't mesh. There are probably people in your office that you just don't get along with. There's no specific reason why; your personalities just don't click.

I'll be the first to tell you that I've met some horses that I didn't like. Their personalities just rubbed me the wrong way. Could I train them? Yes, but I had to make myself like them. If you have to make yourself like a particular horse, it probably isn't going to work out very well. Remember, horsemanship should be fun. You should look forward to going out to the barn to work with your horse and he should look forward to seeing you. If you don't enjoy the time spent with your horse, chances are you won't be as motivated to progress your horsemanship.

If you're an A-type personality—you're a real go-getter—you probably don't want a hot-blooded horse. Your aggressiveness and the horse's sensitivity and reactive nature would be a bad combination. It would be like a crack head riding a crack head.

If you're a really passive, laid-back type of person—nothing really bothers you—you probably don't want a cold-blooded horse. The two of you will be sleeping so much you'll never get out of the barn.



Just like us, horses are happy and content when they get to do a job they love.



Because I have an A-type personality, I find that I work well with horses that fall on the cold-blooded side of the scale. My "go, go, go!" mentality balances out the horse's laziness.