



VISUALIZE & MODEL SUCCESS



Modeling Excellence



Theatre of the Mind

THE TRAINER'S TOOLKIT



Students Watch More Than Lead Changes



→ Anchoring: Trigger Confidence

Personal Best: A Trainer's Guide to Mindset Mastery—On and Off the Horse

Laura King CHT, NLP, Life & Performance Coach

You spend your days helping horses and riders find balance, clarity, timing and confidence. You watch students discover their seat, see horses relax into the bridle and witness an entire lesson change when someone finally *breathes*. Yet many trainers forget to offer themselves the same compassionate guidance they offer everyone else; they give until the tank is dry and then wonder why their own mindset does not stay as buoyant as their students.

This is your invitation to turn your well-honed coaching instincts inward. You can become your own personal best not only in the arena but in your life. You can create the same flow and forward momentum internally that you cultivate in your students. By drawing on the same tools I use to help Olympic athletes, Fortune 500 leaders and equestrians across disciplines, you can reach your personal best. Your personal best is not about perfection; it's about connection,

clarity and consistency. It is about being, as I like to say, perfect enough: an ever-improving version of you who shows up with intention and confidence.

So, take a deep breath. Let's ride.

The Inner Arena: Where Self-Leadership Begins

Every trainer knows that before a young horse can offer a collected canter, it needs balance and rhythm. Before a rider can demonstrate brilliance, they need confidence and clarity. Your personal best begins the same way: with mindful awareness of your thoughts, habits and emotional patterns.

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) has been called the owner's manual for your brain and is built on the idea that our thoughts and language patterns create our outcomes. Change the pattern and you change the results. When you take the reins of your inner dialogue, you can succeed in your relationships, your communication and in your work. Instead of reacting automatically to stress, criticism or self-doubt, you learn to steer your internal state toward confidence and focus.

One of the foundational NLP principles is that the mind responds to the pictures and words you feed it. Most people spend far too many hours imagining everything that could go wrong and replaying mistakes. Trainers are especially susceptible because you replay rides analytically by profession. But replaying past challenges without updating the internal narrative is like asking a young horse to canter a perfect circle after rehearsing nothing but crooked ones.

The solution is simple and powerful. Visualize the version of yourself who shows up grounded, confident and energized. See it in vivid detail. What are you doing differently? How are you speaking to yourself? What does your posture look like? What do you hear and smell? What are you wearing?

Be specific. Your mind takes these mental movies as instructions. Give it a film worth following.

The Myth of Other People's Opinions

Along with the NLP techniques, it's time to consider this: the average human spends an astonishing amount of time worrying about what everyone else is thinking. Whether it is clients, other trainers, clinicians or the person who always seems to have an opinion on warmup strategy, we tend to overestimate how closely others scrutinize us. Here is the liberating truth: everyone else is too busy worrying about what others are thinking about them to worry about you.

A trainer once told me she spent every clinic convinced the riders were judging her every instruction. After some gentle inquiry, we discovered that the participants were probably spending more energy wondering what she thought of their riding. When you realize that everyone is caught in the same mental loop, the pressure releases. You stop performing for imaginary judges and start showing up authentically.

If you can free yourself from the myth that everyone has a magnifying glass pointed directly at your imperfections, you release

a tremendous amount of mental energy. Energy that can go into your craft, your growth and your joy.

Become Your Own Best Student

Trainers excel at observing patterns: You notice when a rider collapses a hip or when a horse is mentally checked out. Use that same observational power on yourself.

Ask these questions:

- What thoughts do I default to under stress?
- What self-talk pattern shows up when something does not go as planned?
- What physical signals tell me I am out of alignment?
- What gives me energy?
- What zaps energy?

When you view yourself through your trainer's lens, you see possibilities rather than problems. Instead of judging, you diagnose. Instead of spiraling, you strategize. That shift alone can elevate your entire personal best trajectory.

Hypnosis: The Shortcut to Mindset Reset

Hypnosis and NLP go together, and they are powerful tools when used properly. Hypnosis is not about control or suggestion.

It is about access to your subconscious mind where you're more receptive to new beliefs. You can shift self-doubt into confidence, anxiety into calm, overwhelm into clarity. I have used hypnosis with professionals across the equestrian world. The results are consistent. When you train the mind to relax deeply, performance rises naturally.

One trainer described hypnosis as the difference between riding a half-halt through quicksand versus riding it on a fresh morning when the horse is attentive, listening and ready. That internal responsiveness is what hypnosis cultivates.

Booking a session with me to begin your hypnosis journey can fast-track your progress but in my book "Perfect Enough," www.laurakinghypnosis.com/booksebooksdvd, I provide detailed instruction and tips for using self-hypnosis.

There are a few basic rules you should learn and then you must practice, practice, practice. Repetition is your friend.

- Rule 1: Create a time limit. Twenty minutes is ideal, but 5-10 minutes will work.
- Rule 2: Get comfortable.
- Rule 3: Initially use the same place to practice.
- Rule 4: Use your environment.
- Rule 5: Always maintain the same attitude.

Here's a simple self-hypnosis exercise you can use anytime:

1. Close your eyes and take three slow breaths.
2. Imagine a warm, steady light in the center of your chest.
3. With each breath, let that light expand through your shoulders, down your arms, down your legs, all the way to your fingertips and toes.
4. When the body feels softened, say quietly to yourself: I allow myself to be calm. I allow myself to be confident. I allow myself to be enough.

**You provide the kid;
We provide the horse.
(Now, that's teamwork.)**

Sometimes team sports involve both 2-legged and 4-legged athletes. The Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) has student athletes in grades 4-12 who ride Hunt Seat, Dressage and Western in a draw-based (catch-ride) format. Over 15,000 members on 1,500+ teams across the United States. Give your student rider a leg up into collegiate riding without having to own a horse.

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Even two minutes of this resets the nervous system and upgrades your internal setting. But there are even more tools you can use for yourself or your students. I also explain these concepts at length in “Perfect Enough.”

The Trainer’s Toolkit: Practical Mindset Techniques

Modeling

The theory of Modeling says we can achieve excellence by finding a place where it exists and copying traits and behaviors.

- Imagine someone riding with ease, confidence and balance. Keep that image in your mind.
- Look at the person’s body and posture. Put yourself in that position.

Consider your thoughts and feelings as you memorize that position. That’s modeling!

Circle of Excellence

The Circle of Excellence is the people, images, sights and sounds that are indicative of excellence. Imagine yourself in the middle of a circle and fill that circle with whatever has contributed to your excellence and whatever is the proof of your excellence. Welcome to the Circle of Excellence.

Theatre of the Mind

Theatre of the Mind is characterized by visualization. It’s been found that repeated *imagined* opportunity stimulates the same nerve connections in the brain that real activities do. This sets you up for repeated excellence and, because there are no errors in your mental activity, the repeated movements will enhance the skill when used in real life,

- Make a movie of yourself—perhaps it’s about mounting a horse. The object is to create a realistic vision of the outcome you’d like to achieve.
- Add as much sensory information as you can pack into your movie including

smells, sights and sounds.

- Remember to add in your internal dialogue.
- Use this imagined movie to help you achieve the same results in real life...

Anchoring

Anchoring is a technique that creates a response through the use of association. It involves creating a trigger that’s connected to a desired response. For example, you could anchor taking a deep breath and to keep breathing when you pick up the reins. I’ve found that anchoring is the tool that creates the most powerful, lasting changes in my clients.

Your Students Are Watching More Than Your Lead Changes

One of the most overlooked truths in horsemanship is that students do not only learn techniques. They learn attitude. They learn energy. They learn how you treat mistakes. When you model being your own personal best, you give them permission to do the same.

You become the example of centered leadership. The trainer who grounds themselves before a difficult conversation or re-frames setbacks constructively. The trainer who demonstrates resilience instead of self-criticism. When you walk into the barn



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Images of hay bales in a barn setting.

modeling confidence, ease and authentic self-leadership, your students absorb far more than anything you explain aloud.

Your Personal Best Is Not a Destination

It is a relationship with yourself, your thoughts, your belief system, and especially with the story you tell yourself each day. Being your personal best is like training a young horse. It requires patience, repetition, curiosity and the willingness to celebrate small wins.

There is no finish line. Just continual refinement until one day you realize that your inner voice is kinder, your stress is lower, your focus is sharper, and your joy is louder.

You are the rider, the trainer and the horse in this journey. You control the direction, you hold the reins, and you can choose a path that brings more confidence, more clarity and more fulfillment.

Here is your final invitation: treat yourself with the same generosity, structure and be-

lief you bring to the arena. Your personal best is not somewhere out there. It is already in you, waiting for you to ask it to move forward. And trust me. It is ready to trot on.

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About the author:

Laura King is the Director and Founder of Summit Hypnosis and Wellness and is a Certified Hypnotist, NLP Practitioner, Life Coach, and Sports Performance Coach. Laura has written and published several books and workbooks, including "Power To Win" for equestrians and "Perfect Enough," a guide to help you evaluate your perceptions and experiences around vital areas of your life.