

## TOUCH SKILLS

Touch is conversation

Main conversation: You are safe

Stroke as conversation -- 4 parts to each stroke:

- 1) Greeting - contact the tissue in the direction you mean to go
- 2) Connection question (how are you?) - Engage the tissue (sinking in)
- 3) Heart of the conversation - follow the wave
- 4) Respectful parting (Vaya con Dios) - end the movement of the stroke and ease out of the tissue

### Method

Before you start, remove any tension from your body

- 1) Face in the direction you intend the stroke to go
- 2) Always stay behind the wave of releasing tissue (smearing the mud)
- 3) Bring the stroke movement from as far down your body as possible
- 4) Lower your center of gravity
- 5) As you work, get a sense of the horse's tolerance limit and work just inside it
- 6) Use soft tools (think cotton balls)
- 7) Constantly adjust stroke depth and speed based on the tissue quality and the horse's responses
- 8) Stroke intention: seeing vs. working
- 9) Velcro: Strong velcro - even pressure, little or no sliding  
Weak velcro - even pressure with sliding
- 10) Start each session with light pressure and slow strokes
- 11) Make it relaxed

### Tools

Stiff fingers, hook fingers, finger pulls, heel of palm, fist and forearm (elbow)