

TO TEACH IS TO DEVELOP

”To teach is to develop”...this means that we cannot create an ability that does not already exist. Our task as instructors is to develop the student's innate ability.

People are born with potential, which under the right conditions can be developed. For a rider to develop to his full potential, he must be given the opportunity and the help to develop a style that suits his way of learning.

There are obviously certain factors that must be taken into account as we help our students develop, such as the laws of nature, and the rules and regulations of our sport. And we must also make sure the horse is comfortable with the methods used by the rider. But each rider must be allowed to find his own way.

If we were to take five of the best dressage riders in the world, for example, Anky van Grunsven, Ulla Salzgeber, Klaus Balkenhol, Charlotte Bredahl and Robert Dover, who are all very capable, and say to them, ”“Ulla, you should ride like Anky, Charlotte, you should ride like Ulla, Robert you should ride like Klaus...” How would that turn out? It would be a sad sight, and really, it would never work even though all five of them belong to the elite of their sport.

Each rider has his or her own philosophy and manner. It is the development of this individual style - one that suits the student and his riding – that gives the rider his strength.

In other words, the ability to understand the student and to assess his potential is of utmost importance as far as the outcome of the work with the student is concerned. In this context, the instructor needs to be receptive and observant.

When we attempt to create a copy of ourselves, we are seldom successful in making a winner. Even if we could force a student with an iron fist to copy us, he may be forever a runner-up; never a winner. To make a winner it is necessary to leave room for personal style. And the same applies to the training of the dressage horse.

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