

# Equality Quick Reference: *Communicating with Reinforcement Theory*

**be·hav·ior** /bi'hāv·yər/ Noun:

Anything and everything your horse, you, or anyone else does, including actions, words, and thoughts.

**re·in·force·ment** /,rē-in'fōrsmənt/ Noun:

The act or process of increasing the likelihood of a given behavior.

## R+ Positive Reinforcement

Increasing a behavior by adding a favorable stimulus (reward) in response to the behavior. Use R+ when an aroused, excited mind state is in line with the desired behavior.

### Communicating with R+

- 1) Create a situation in which the desired behavior is likely to be offered. *Use the environment, objects, pressure, etc.*
- 2) Mark the desired behavior using a click or other signal and reward.

*Repeat 1 and 2 until such time as the desired behavior is offered automatically, without stimulus.*

- 3) Give a cue and reward the first time the behavior is offered after the cue. Cease rewarding in absence of the cue.

*Repeat 3 until such time as the behavior is reliably offered in response to the cue and is not offered in its absence.*

- 4) Be delighted: you have created understanding with another!

*Everything that I understand, I understand only because I love. - Leo Tolstoy*

## R- Negative Reinforcement

Increasing a behavior by removing an aversive (uncomfortable) stimulus in response to the behavior. Use R- when a calm, meditative mind state is most compatible with the desired behavior.

### Communicating with R-

- 1) Give a cue.
- 2) Add polite but persistent pressure (aversive stimulus) until the desired behavior is offered.

*Note: ALWAYS give the cue before adding ANY pressure. Otherwise the association between cue and behavior will be unclear and pressure will likely always remain necessary.*

- 3) Mark the desired behavior by releasing the pressure in the instant the desired behavior is offered.

*Repeat 1, 2 and 3 until such time as the desired behavior is reliably offered in response to the cue without any pressure.*

- 4) Feel delightful: You have fostered insight in another!

*A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience. - Oliver Wendell Holmes*

*Empathy + Vision + Communication = Delight*