

leadership instalments

**You do not work alone,
you are in this together.**

By Dan Gaynor

THE NEXT TIME PROFESSIONAL SHOW JUMPING IS ON television watch and learn from the way each rider and horse work together. Riders have a saying: On any given day they have a 25 percent chance of success. Both horse and rider must be at their best on the same day; this places the odds at one in four on any given day. Both halves of the relationship must contribute. Riding clearly illustrates that the relationship a leader has with his or her team is codependent – one cannot succeed without the other. The rider's limitations and potential are determined by the performance of the horse, the horse's rest largely upon the man or woman in the saddle. Each will limit or lift the other. This is your challenge and your opportunity.

Each rider's success or failure rests upon his or her ability to draw the best out of the horse. The rider directs; the horse follows. The rider responds to the performance of the horse. It is a subtle symphony of cooperation. Only the best prevail. They succeed or fail together. Show jumping is an unforgiving sport. When riders make mistakes, they crash hard into unforgiving ground. They have lots of incentive to get it right. I have often thought it's too bad more leaders don't have as much incentive to fix what is wrong in their relationships. When we mess up, we crash as well, it's just not physically painful. Each rider uses his or her voice, hands, leg and seat (through which a constant stream of communication passes back and forth) to direct the horse to just the right takeoff point at just the right pace. Riders adjust

their approach constantly based on the feedback coming up from the horse. When riders make mistakes, the best horses pull them through. You will have these moments as well. They are the litmus tests of leadership. These are the moments – our mistakes – when we find out if our team is with us or not.

Horses perform far better, take risks for their riders and do much more when there is a skilled and caring leader in the saddle. Rider and horse face a moment of truth with each fence they approach. They must trust each other. As a horse approaches a solid six or even seven foot wall, it cannot see what is on the other side – it is literally a leap of faith.

It is the same leap you can expect when you get the leadership relationship right to.



For more on how to develop the fullest potential of your leadership team call us for a workshop.