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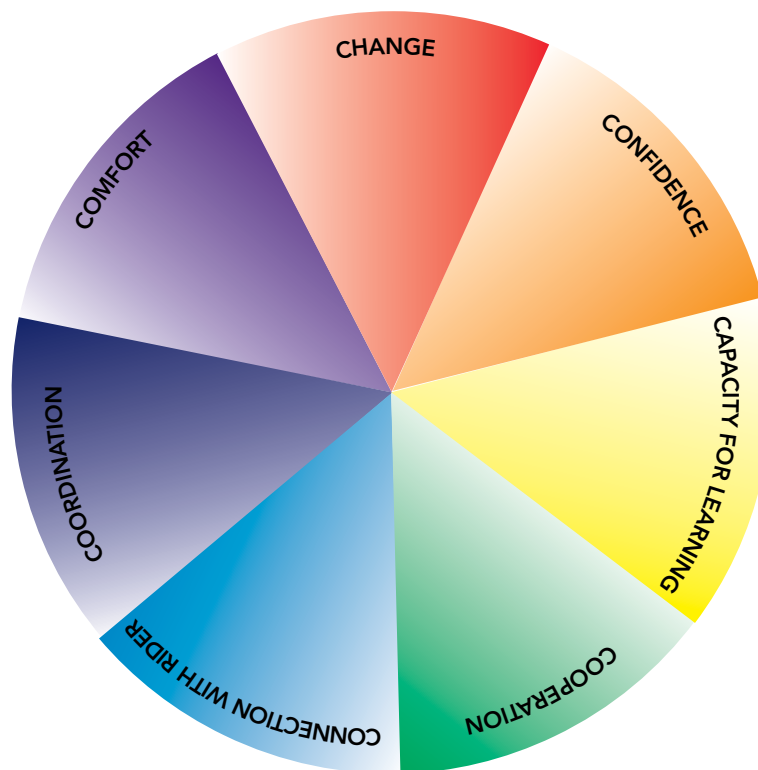


**SO** HOW CAN YOU TAKE THE DIFFERENT IDEAS AND COMPONENTS that make up the Tellington Method, which I discussed at length in Part One, and translate them into a language that makes sense for the sport of dressage? When it comes to applying all you have learned so far, you may wonder just where to begin. Honestly, *where* the change starts isn't as important as, quite simply, it *starting*.

Perhaps you have strategically adhered to the principles outlined in the Training Scale, but there is one area, or several, where you and your horse struggle or get stuck. This “stumbling block” can serve as your starting point. In chapter 8 (p. 94), I provide specific *TTouches*, *Ground Exercises*, and *Ridden Work* according to the Training Scale, as well as guidance for creating a daily *TTouch* plan for your horse.

It may be that your horse displays one of many common training, behavioral, or health problems, in which case, let me assure you, you are by no means alone. This, too, can provide your initial reason for using the Tellington Method in your daily horse care and riding routine. Perhaps your horse suffers from stress related to travel or recurring health issues. Maybe he takes a long time to warm up, or even after a lengthy time spent easing him into a workout, he remains stiff and reticent in his work. I provide real-life examples that demonstrate how the Tellington Method can go a long way to solving these kinds of problems in chapter 9 (p. 120).

But before I approach issues with the Training Scale, and before I troubleshoot common problems with behavior and performance, I would like to illustrate the specific areas of physical and psychological development my *Method* addresses so you can better understand its potential in aiding in your horse's existence as a happy and healthy athlete. I have designed a “pie” that shows what I like to call the “Seven Cs”: *Comfort*; *Confidence*; *Capacity for Learning*; *Coordination*; *Cooperation*; *Connection with Rider*; and *Change* (fig. 7.1). It is my opinion that the Seven Cs are *equal* in weight and importance—none must precede the other—and, in fact, it is best if the horse has all seven in place from the very beginning of his development as a dressage mount.



### 7.1 The Seven Cs.

Therefore, you should aim to apply them in equal measure when you picture them as the symmetrical pieces of a very colorful pie.

The Tellington Method not only enables horse and rider to confirm the classical training principles—plus *Balance*—via engagement of both hemispheres of the brain, it also verifies every step along the way via these Seven Cs. Each of them is fundamentally necessary for any horse, no matter how naturally talented, to learn and eventually excel at dressage; therefore, it should be your goal to address each of them with the same focus you apply to the principles of the Training Scale.

I briefly describe the Seven Cs on the pages that follow, and each of them is a necessary ingredient to improving your horse's dressage ability while solving common problems. In addition, I remind you that each of the Seven Cs is assigned a *color*, the same as its parallel element in the Tellington Training Scale (see p. 54). I also provide guidance in *targeting your intention* in the process of establishing the Seven Cs as integral facets of your horse's training.

.....The Seven Cs

Comfort

Dressage horses are athletes. Their body works hard to bend, flex, collect, and extend thus leading to physical soreness in particular areas; fatigue; and often unsoundness. My unique form of bodywork—*TTouch*—enables you to treat existing soreness or injury, and prevent development of chronic problems. First and foremost a dressage horse needs to be *comfortable* to perform (fig. 7.2).

**The Color:** *Comfort* is the color *violet*, the color of *Balance*—mental, physical, and emotional well-being (see p. 52).

**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so they encompass your horse's mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Think of his muscles, joints, and ligaments working together in concert, of his body being free of discomfort, of his movement being uninhibited.



7.2 A dressage horse performs best when he is comfortable and free from pain. *TTouch* has been proven to both prevent and treat the physical wear and tear that comes with the years of serious training and conditioning necessary in order to compete the sport horse. For example, *Belly Lifts* with a towel can help relax tight back muscles and avoid soreness in this area, and they can significantly improve a horse's ability to consistently work over the back and come "through."

## Confidence

Highly bred for spirit and animation in the competitive arena, many dressage horses may be of particular sensitivity, often making them excitable, skittish, and spooky (figs. 7.3 A & B). In addition, overtraining or heavy-handed discipline can create timidity or fearfulness that leads to trouble in new or tense situations. My series of *Ground Exercises*, combined with *TTouches*, can increase confidence in the most timid of animals. Specifically, *TTouches* override the instinctual flight reflex and teach the horse to “think” rather than “react.” A dressage horse needs to be *confident* to learn new lessons and give his best in competitive environments.

**The Color:** *Confidence* is the color *orange*, the color of *Straightness* (see p. 53). A confident horse moves assuredly ahead, every cell directed as one from Point A to Point B.

**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so you hand your horse the ability to be sure of himself in his surroundings. He is king of his castle, he balks at nothing, shies at no one. And don't forget, *your own confidence* provides him all the impetus he needs to stride assuredly forward.

## Capacity for Learning

Dressage horses are expected to learn and remember countless aids and cues for various movements—knowledge accumulated over a number of years. In addition, dressage tests differ from level to level, and in order to increase collection or animation, new exercises are introduced throughout a horse's lifetime. When a horse learns to trust his rider, this trust will override the fear and flight instinct, and the horse's *Capacity for Learning* is enhanced, assuring progress from one level of performance to the next (fig. 7.4).

**The Color:** *Capacity for Learning* is *yellow* for *Impulsion* (see p. 53). When your horse is open and ready to absorb new lessons, when he is eager to participate, he is propelled forward in both his ability to perform and his ability to associate with humans and other animals.

**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so you imagine your horse gobbling up lessons the way he gobbles up grass, moving steadily, hungrily, without hesitation, bite after bite, seemingly insatiable.





**7.3 A & B** Some dressage horses today have a tendency to be timid, skittish, and spooky, lacking the ability to deal with new or unusual obstacles or surroundings. *Ground Exercises* combined with *TTouches* can increase confidence and help reactive, anxiety-ridden horses deal with day-to-day challenges in a calm, safe manner. This confidence will translate quickly into improved performance in the dressage arena.

A simple exercise like learning to step on a flat wood surface or even a black stall mat in the arena can help to ground and focus a reactive horse. After our work together, Dablino becomes less suspicious and more willing to approach, pass, and traverse unusual footing or strange sights; he learns to *think* rather than simply *react*.





7.4 Dressage horses are expected to learn and remember aids, movements, aural cues. They spend a lifetime in the classroom, with numerous “quizzes” and tests. Their capacity for learning, for absorbing new information and retaining old, can be improved with the Tellington Method, in particular work in the *Labyrinth* to gain focus and mental, physical, and emotional balance, as we are doing with Dablino here.

### Coordination

The intricate, delicate movements of dressage are indeed an art form—a dance. Muscles are flexed, legs are crossed, and motion suspended. This demands an incredible amount of athleticism—namely *Coordination*. While not all horses are born with excellent coordination, you can markedly improve this characteristic (figs. 7.5 A & B). A *coordinated* dressage horse will be able to score better at his current level and progress more easily up the ladder to higher levels of training.

**The Color:** *Coordination* is the color *electric indigo* for *Rhythm* (see p. 53). Coordination is one of the keys to rhythm, and further evidence of mastery of the physical self.

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A



B

**7.5 A & B** Not all horses are born with the coordination they need to perform movements in the competitive dressage arena. *Touches*, *Ground Exercises* and *Ridden Work*, however, have been shown to improve the horse's proprioception (his ability to understand where his body is in space) and handle it, and namely his feet and legs, appropriately.

Cavalletti and gridwork such as Ingrid Klimke demonstrates here will improve coordination significantly with the addition of *Front Leg Circles*, *Hind Leg Circles*, *Lick of the Cow's Tongue*, and *Tail Pulls*, which give the horse a sense of connection throughout his body. Work in the *Labyrinth* with careful attention to navigation and balance around corners can also bring many ways.

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**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so you see your horse's basic gaits as if they are steps of a dance. Visualize each step perfected, each foot clearly and perfectly placed, each sideways movement fluid as if the horse were more liquid than solid.

### Cooperation

Horse and rider can only be truly connected through *Cooperation*. Dressage lessons are hard and the aids for different movements can be similar, or they consist of a combination of multiple cues. An argumentative horse who puts up a fight whenever he is challenged or whose first inclination is to refuse to try something new will have a hard time progressing upward through the Tellington Training Scale. Use of my *Method* has shown to improve a horse's inclination to work *with* rather than *against* his rider. A dressage horse who *cooperates* every step along the way can make day-to-day training a true pleasure rather than an uncomfortable—and dangerous—struggle for supremacy (fig. 7.6).

**The Color:** *Cooperation* is the color *green* for *Contact* (see p. 53). There is no connection without cooperation. A horse accepting of the hand, responsive to the seat and leg, and who is “one with you” in mind and matter, is in tune with the basic premise of dressage.

**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so your relationship with your horse is clear. This should be a partnership based on interdependence and balance, neither one of you more needy than the other. Your horse should willingly and joyfully give and receive just as freely as you do.

### Connection with Rider

Many of the horse-and-rider teams at the top of dressage sport represent true partnerships, usually many years in the making. It is beyond a doubt that the most successful of them are intuitively communicating via a carefully established and nurtured connection. Through *TTouches*, *Ground Exercises*, and *Ridden Work*, the Tellington Method offers myriad ways to be with your horse and form or further your relationship. When a dressage horse is *connected with his rider* he will be more in tune to her aids and try harder to perform when asked (fig. 7.7).

**The Color:** *Connection with Rider* is the color *blue* for *Suppleness* (see p. 53). Blue and suppleness together enhance the flow of communication, integral for true connection. Think of the clear blue waters of the ocean as they wave and roll, ebb and flow, connecting distant lands and creatures above and below.

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7.6 Dressage can be an exercise in frustration when your horse pits his will against yours every step of the way. The premise of the Tellington Method is to help horses discover ways to work *with* their rider and handler, and to improve their attitude and work ethic because lessons are interesting and pain-free. My techniques can instill a general desire to cooperate, as exhibited here by Heartbreaker (see more about him on p. 144). When we began work with Heartbreaker the platform and pool noodles inspired massive anxiety and a fight to escape. After a day's work using my *Method*, he cooperated with our requests in a quiet, interested, and pleasant manner.



7.7 Dressage with "heART" requires a true connection be established between you and the horse. This enables communication to flow both ways, uninterrupted, and completely clear to both "sender" and "receiver." I take a moment on one of Ingrid Klimke's horses to target my thoughts and connect with my mount. Note the horse's soft expression—open and ready to listen to what I have to say. The *Balance Rein* around his neck gives him a sense of freedom that encourages connection with me—his rider.

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**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so you have in your mind a vision of one being, a centaur-like creature, horse and rider connected in such a manner as to make it difficult to determine where one begins and the other ends.

### Change

I include this principle because this book is about *transformation*. It is about *changing your mind* so you can *change your horse*—that is, the way your horse thinks, the way he feels, the way he behaves, and the way he performs (figs. 7.8 A–C). And *you* need to remember that change is indeed possible, and it may be easier than you think! Training your horse with a predetermined idea, such as “He always breaks gait in this corner,” or “He hates tempi changes and will never like them,” or “He’s just not very talented,” assumes that change is too difficult or unlikely to achieve. This is detrimental to your horse ever improving in areas of difficulty, and it certainly prevents the two of you from reaching your potential.

In addition, your horse is your teacher. Challenges you face alongside him are your opportunities to develop a new understanding or skill. Believe in the possibility for change for the better, on your horse’s part and on your own, and you may find you are pleasantly surprised by the relationship and the rapport that awaits you. Through the years, my organization, Tellington TTouch Training, has logged countless case studies of people giving their horse a fresh start and, in a relatively short time, having that horse completely change his attitude and way of going. Trust me! You can be one of these success stories.

**The Color:** *Change* is the color *red* for *Collection* (see p. 53). Collection has always been the pinnacle of the Training Scale, the end goal of dressage. It is also representative of change: a change in the way the horse carries himself; a change in the way you communicate with him; and ideally, a change in how you will forever go about attaining future riding goals.

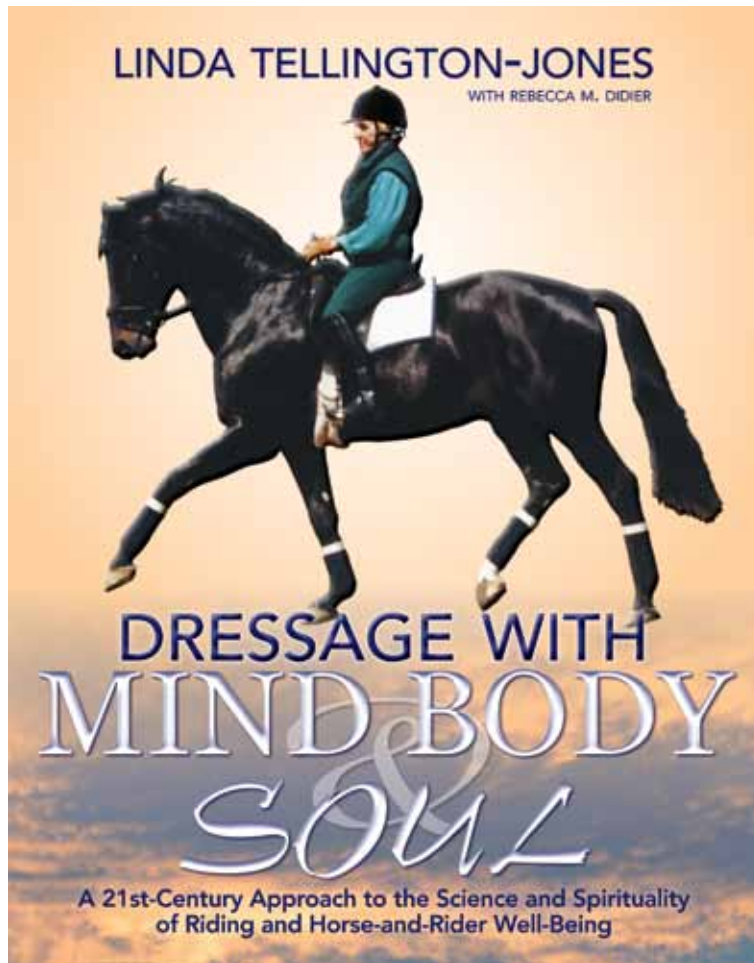
**The Intention:** Target your thoughts so you envision your horse in a state of metamorphosis. His learning curve and your learning curve are both necessary in order for him to ultimately grow wings and “fly.”

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7.8 A–C With the Tellington Method you can break free of your old patterns, clear long-time hurdles, and ignore what might once have borne an impasse. *Change your mind and you can change your horse.* Every horse, whatever the problem or challenge, has the potential to change for the better and become all you can imagine for him. Dablino, for instance, responds to our work by progressively lowering his very high head. And this fairly small, perhaps seemingly insignificant change can be a gateway to bigger changes in his confidence and performance under saddle.





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