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When Two Spines Align: Dressage Dynamics: Attain Remarkable Riding Rapport With Your Horse



Synopsis

Within riding exists a fundamental conflict of interest: The rider needs to have control; her confidence depends on her ability to control the balance of her own body as well as that of her very powerful horse. The horse, by nature, needs to feel free; free in both mind and body to express himself through movement. In *When Two Spines Align*, author Beth Baumert, writer and editor at the equestrian magazine *Dressage Today*, resolves the freedom-control enigma by taking a close look at the individual components that make up riding and dressage and providing practical ways riders can learn to harness the balance, energies, and forces at play. Readers will discover how to use "positive tension" and their body's "power lines" to become balanced and effective in the saddle. They will then find ways to understand and manage the horse's balance and coordination challenges. Ultimately, the rider learns to regulate and monitor the horse's rhythm, energy, flexion, alignment, bend, and line of travel by properly aligning her spine with his. When the center of gravity of a balanced rider is over the center of gravity of a balanced horse, that place where two spines align becomes the hub for rider and horse harmony.

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Customer Reviews

This is easily the most influential book I have read for improving my riding. Much as I love Sally Swift, this book had a bigger impact for me -- captures that essence of the Swift metaphors and goes further in its analysis of what constitutes good riding -- there are exercises too. *When Spines Align* is about more than posture -- it has helped me to better understand the right "feel" -- both in the particulars (connection, use of weight, etc) and more generally. I have been implementing what

I've learned for about a month, and my trainer (who did not know I was reading the book) has been saying things like "I don't know what you are doing but you have changed your riding." There is a significant difference in my horse, and for the first time in quite awhile I feel that a) he is happy in the work and b) we are making progress.

As a long-time equestrian and dressage rider, I am ashamed to admit that this is the first book on riding that I have read cover to cover. Not that I haven't tried - my shelves are crammed with shiny-new-looking books from the best of the best, but I have always found them to be confusing, dry, or unhelpful. If you are going to buy one book on dressage to give you the best possible understanding of classical training and horse/rider biomechanics, this should be it. If the mark of a true genius is to take something very complicated and be able to explain it fully and accurately to an 8-year-old, then this author is a genius. Everything in this book is just so well laid out and CLEAR. I thought I knew in a sort of murky way what it was to ride "uphill" or to half-halt or how the training scale fits together, but this book has really given me an UNDERSTANDING of such concepts. It's really well done!

I have been a student of Beth's for 12 years. She is an absolute genius in making something that may be very complicated, very clear and relatable to the amateur rider. I have seen results in the training of my young horse who was a clean slate when he arrived from Denmark. Her methods have created such wonderful harmony between horse and rider. I have been amazed at the difference in my horse. I never would have believed the results except that I am able to see it unfold with each ride. This young, very distracted, and somewhat insecure horse, has become a solid citizen and a real gentleman under saddle, thanks to her. It's terrific that this knowledge can be shared with dressage riders at all levels.

It had been eight years since I had a lesson - and the last one had been with Beth. This book brought it all back and has helped me find my way back to harmony as I've returned to riding. I've read a lot of dressage books in my past; this one ranks near the top. The insights Beth has gained through her years as technical editor of Dressage have coalesced into the precise, concise paradigm of Dressage Dynamics. All I can say is "Wow." And also, "Thanks, Beth!"

I was super excited to receive and dive into this book, but I'm really not caring for it...at all! It is all over the place referencing far into the book, The author assumes the reader knows all the lingo and

you read a hundred pages at a time wondering when you will understand, if ever. I was bored within the first chapters and by page 70 I was ready to throw in the towel. I'm still plodding on but I wish I hadn't purchased it at all. NOW AFTER FINISHING THE BOOK...I would like to clarify my previous review after having finished the book with somewhat DIFFERENT FEELINGS. I hope I can help someone like me who had trouble with it, because THERE IS GOOD INFO HERE. Did I enjoy reading it? No! It is textbook dry but I'm glad I read it!When the author says something like I'll be getting more in depth on this subject later page 100, go there immediately! I didn't because I thought I'm already lost I'm sure to be baffled with more intricate in depth information. The book is just written that way continually referencing far into the book. Better yet, when you first say hmm...go to your computer and start googling. There are typos which confused me too. Like in two different places it says halt-halt then in a few strides again half-halt. Well unless there's a halt-halt a halt and a half halt well you get the picture. "AT X" then there would be no X on the arena diagram. Further on, in another diagram oh, there's X it's in the center of the arena...silly me. If, for instance you want to refer back to an exercise, good luck! because unless you know exactly what that exercise was trying to improve, you've got no reference. It's indexed really weird to me. I still don't know which way tracking right or tracking left wants me to go and there is no reference in the index for tracking at all. It would have been a much more enjoyable read if the author could have just told the many reasons for half halt and the posture for shoulder fore right off the bat instead of a hundred pages later. I know it says DRESSAGE DYNAMICS on the cover but I thought I'd be learning about dressage dynamics instead of being required to have been born and bred in the field. It seemed kind of snobbish to me, like only intended for those "in the know" and I felt pretty dumb sometimes reading it, and that didn't give me a warm fuzzy feeling. But it is really good info!My favorite part of the book was the last two lines, in the conclusion..."He passages and piaffs down the final centerline with elasticity and vigor BECAUSE HE'S PROUD TO CARRY YOU. THAT'S WHERE TWO MINDS MEET, TWO HEARTS MEET, AND THE MAGIC BEGINS." If the whole book could have been written in this spirit I would have been over the moon with joy, I'm all about the lightbulb moments with my horse and so is my guy. That connection is what we all want. I hope he will be able to tell something is different and appreciate all the effort I put into reading this book. I'm sure he will!! maybe you should read it too! but just sayin'...just because it is scientific in nature, doesn't mean it has to be boring, right? Thank you though, Beth Beaumert for the great information and all the effort put into this book. It couldn't have been easy. and I'M GLAD I READ IT!!... but I'm glad I'm done :)

This book is well-written and therefore the ideas flow easily from the page. I find the use of mental

imagery, riding exercises and in-depth explanations of theory useful to riders of all levels and disciplines. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to improve his or her harmony in the saddle.

This book has everything that is important and interesting for the dressage student,. This is many books all in one - it is the culmination or an anthology of so many concepts, ideas and theories gathered by Beth over many years having interviewed 'anyone who is anyone' in the dressage world, all in one amazing package. It also draws on her life time of hands on experience as a trainer and rider. This book is not only 'how' but 'why' and 'what if you don't' and 'what not to do' to how it 'feels'. It is full of exercises and problem solving solutions all easy to follow and clearly laid out. Also many wonderful photographs and illustrations you will recognize the artist from 'Solutions' in Dressage Today, the gifted Sandy Robinowitz.

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