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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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sometimes when I'm teaching I find myself thinking my student really needs to read Beth Baumert's book. The perspective and the words she's chosen give a welcomed fresh approach to describing the theories behind training. George Williams, member of the US Dressage Team and President of the United States Dressage

Federation (USDF)&#147;I absolutely LOVE this book! It grabbed me from the moment I read the words &#145;perfect balance&#145; and &#145;that place where two spines meet&#145;;you get such a great visual from this! When teaching, it can be a struggle to help riders who can&#145;t seem to balance themselves. This is where author Beth Baumert provides a valuable tool: She explains why the rider&#145;s balance is the key to the horse&#145;s balance and how a controlled interaction of balance ultimately leads to success and harmony. This book is where the magic begins.&#145;Debbie McDonald, two-time Olympian and USEF Developing Dressage Coach&#147;Beth Baumert and I are on the same wavelength when it comes to horses and dressage training. Now she has created the best guide I&#145;ve seen for those who really want to grasp the ins and outs of dressage&#145;I&#145;ve never read a book covering all facets of dressage in this detail. With all that is going on in our sport today, I hope that riders&#145;now and in the future&#145;will pursue dressage as it is described here by Beth.&#145;Henk van Bergen, former Chef d&#145;Equipe of the Dutch National Dressage Team and British National Young Riders Developing Team, and member of the FEI Judges Supervisory Panel&#147;This book is truly timeless. I can humbly admit that it clarified some subject even for me, after a lifetime of being involved with dressage. It is the equivalent of countless clinics given by some of the best in the world.&#145;Axel Steiner, FEI 5\* Dressage Judge (retired), USEF &#147;S&#145; Judge, and USDF &#147;L&#145; Program faculty member&#147;Beth Baumert&#145;s book is desperately needed. I see many riders going down the wrong road, often because of a dubious understanding of the term &#145;dressage&#145; and a limited view of its importance. Whatever you are riding&#145;whether hunters, ponies, jumpers&#145;I recommend that you learn about and use dressage in your schooling, if only for reasons of maintaining soundness. I&#145;m lucky that, in my life of riding and teaching, there has never been jumping without flatwork. But that&#145;s in my own little world. Today&#145;s riders are too consumed with cosmetics and competition. Even riders at the top have somehow lost what the Masters knew centuries ago! Every rider needs to know the basic tenets of dressage, and so I recommend When Two Spines Align: Dressage Dynamics. I can&#145;t say enough good about it.&#145;George Morris, former Chef d&#145;Equipe of the US Show Jumping Team&#147;This is a great book! It mirrors what I see in Beth Baumert&#145;s students&#145;they all demonstrate a very classical way of riding and training horses. When Two Spines Align: Dressage Dynamics clearly explains the classical foundation of how the rider should balance and sit so that he or she can then educate the horse. Beth has provided a valuable tool for all kinds and levels of riders.&#145;Bo Jena,

Chef d'Equipe, Swedish Dressage Team and FEI 4\* Judge

[T]he best reason to read *When Two Spines Align* is that your horse will thank you for it; no matter what your discipline. [W]hen you move in true harmony with [your horse] so that it looks as if the movements are his idea; it's the moment we all strive for. This book can help you get there.

Practical Horseman

"This is easily the most influential book I have read for a long, long time. So many great concepts it is almost overwhelming. HUGE thumbs up

• you will love this book.

• Behind the Bit Blog

Within riding there 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 physical movement. In *When Two Spines Align: Dressage Dynamics*, author Beth Baumert, writer and editor at the internationally recognized equestrian magazine *Dressage Today*, resolves the freedom-control enigma by taking a close look at the individual components that make up riding and dressage. Beth provides insight gleaned from years of working with the best riders, trainers, and judges in the dressage world, and details practical ways riders can learn to harness the balance, energies, and forces at play when they're in the saddle. Readers will discover how to use 'positive tension' and what the author calls the four physical 'Powerlines': Vertical, Connecting, Spiraling, and Visual; to become balanced and effective in the saddle. Readers will then find ways to understand and manage the horse's balance and coordination challenges, including the fact that he is inherently crooked and naturally inclined to do too much with his front end and not enough with his hind. Ultimately, the rider learns to regulate and monitor the horse's rhythm, energy, flexion, alignment, bend, the height and length of his neck, and, finally, his line of travel by properly aligning her spine with his. When the center of gravity of a balanced rider is directly over the center of gravity of a balanced horse, that place where two spines align becomes the hub for rider and horse harmony; a dynamic and remarkable riding rapport that yields beautiful performance.

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.

Highly recommended book. I have bought many books on Horseback Riding and Dressage. This book is by far the best! It is in language that is easy to understand and picture in your mind. It explains how to hold your reins, elbows, head, legs, etc, and, most importantly, how to balance on your horse. It also explains the concept of half-halt. It is actually better than my trainer in explaining many things! Possibly because my trainer is so advanced it is hard for her to explain the basics. So before I take another lesson I am reading this book & practicing with my horse. When I feel ready for my next Dressage lesson I will know exactly what I want my trainer to help me with.

This book is so easy to understand. My horse & I really enjoy the exercises. "When Two Spines Align" has taken my riding to a much higher level. A year ago, my horse was diagnosed with A back problem. His vets, trainer & physical therapist have done a great job, & he's back to work. This book has helped me to find ways to improve his muscle balance & development. We are having fun again. If he could, my horse would thank Beth Baumert.

This is one of my FAVORITE books about dressage. As a "number cruncher" and analytical person, I always have to understand the "why" before I can translate that into the physical mechanics and eventually the feel. This book successfully bridged that gap for me, providing the theory and the "why" while translating that into feel. As I advance in my dressage training, I am finding that your intentions are just as important, if not more important, than your physical abilities. Dressage is all about managing "energy" and this book provides a great description and many mental tools for working WITH the energy in a productive and healthy way for both horse and rider. I would recommend this book to any rider! Dana Sambogna

Love this book. It is able to put things in perspective from the riders point of view and into how it relays to the horse. How our body language and body position effect the horse and the horses movements. There are also step by step exercises given as well in each chapter. The chapters build

up more and get more advanced the further along you go. Definitely a must have for any dressage rider and also for anyone who wants to improve their riding in general. I believe all riders would benefit from reading this and learning more about how their position truly does affect the horse and also how to get your horse into a proper frame and strengthen their back.

I showed it to my Physical therapist who was immediately urging me to DO THE EXERCISES.

Be ready for a GREAT, technical read. Not that it's too complex, but Beth Baumert goes into such detail, that I have to read each segment closely. Then read it again. This isn't a book for people who want to just tool around with lower level dressage - it's a book for those who want to have a clear connection with their mount, and perform to the highest levels possible.

Really interesting and extremely well written, good explanations of the feelings you shall get, the best book I ever read on position, balance, the right place of the neck, the right length of the reins.... I'll read some passages over and over regularly so that it gets into my body....

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Driving Horses: How to Harness, Align, and Hitch your Horse for Work or Play 101  
Dressage Exercises for Horse & Rider (Read & Ride) Breaking and Training the Stock Horse (and Teaching Basic Principles of Dressage) The Riding Horse Repair Manual: Not the Horse You Want? Create Him from What You Have  
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