

## Let's Ride!

**“Three lessons from the trail to your work.”**

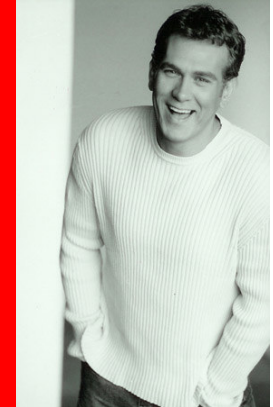
Buffalo, Wyoming is possibly one of the last places in America where you can still taste the simple life. When my father and I arrive, we always feel as though we shed the deadlines and cares of the business world and become part of the Wild West; we become cowboys! Life on this working cattle ranch seems simple to an outsider, but to the ranchers who work out here every day life is a never-ending work in progress. After about twelve hours in the saddle we also remember that, while we may be paying for our one week work vacation on the trail, we have a job to do. The fifteen hundred head of cattle must be moved from the low lying ranch to the mountain pasture before the week is over. The only method of moving this many animals this far on this challenging terrain is by horseback. This is a fun time, but work to be certain.

Every year when we visit we expect to enjoy ourselves beyond imagination, because each cattle drive is different than the last. We always expect to work with the same great people, eat the same great food and the feel of the saddle beneath us as we drive the cattle across the mountain. This time however, I saw parallels in ranching and in life that I never expected to learn.

### **Lesson #1 – Flexibility - the key to your overall success**

Waking up in the morning on the trail, you know that the day ahead will be a hot fast day of cattle rustling so there is a feeling of anticipation and excitement in the air. Today, your success may be determined by the way you handle your horse when a bull breaks from the herd. Your success may rest in the way you follow John's directions; as the trail boss, he will have the final say. Things change and if you come to the Ranch with a preconceived notion or assumption of how the trip will go you will be disappointed, but more importantly you become a liability to the crew. Everyone must be flexible if the entire crew is to reach that mountain. There is no time for your petty egoic inflexible nature. You must bend and mold to the mission at hand. These are animals after all and they have no care for your agenda. In your work the same is true. One of the classic challenges teams of people face is the lack of flexibility. How many times have you been so rigid in your “win” mentality that your judgment was clouded?

Flexibility is the key to success in the business world. As the business changes or your customers change their interests, you too must adapt. Flexibility is the key to your success!

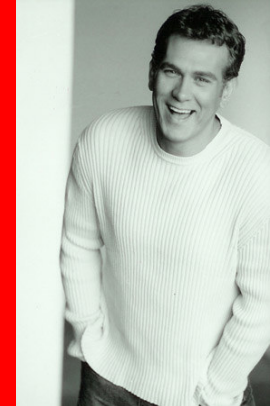


**Mentoring Programs**

**Business Development**

**Workshops**

**DVD – Hey DJ...FOCUS!**



**Mentoring Programs**

**Business Development**

**Workshops**

**DVD – Hey DJ...FOCUS!**

## **Lesson #2 – Don't ride out ahead of the herd or you might turn them back**

This lesson was one that one of the other guest workers learned the hard way. After only a few minutes of riding, this guest was restless and decided to ride up to the front of the herd. This herd stretches over a mile and at many different points; John has asked certain people to hold the line in a specific area. Your role then is to ride along on that side and make sure that cattle do not break off into the thick woods. Instead, this particular guest became restless and rode to the front yelling at the cattle the entire way. As he galloped about 20 feet ahead of the first few heifers in the front, they became nervous and promptly turned around. In an instant, hundreds of cattle were facing the opposite direction and running into the back half of the herd. Many of us lead by John quickly rode into the middle to stop the disaster. It took some time but we finally turned them all back.

Often I see business people who operate this same way. They get out ahead of the customer or the company. This can intimidate the clients or colleagues which lead to the entire project or situation turning the other way. Stay focused on the Big Picture of your company and your team. Getting to know your customers or your colleagues begins with paying attention to them all of the time, even when you get restless. After all, they know the mountain better than you do and if you help them stay in on the trail, you will all make it to the top of the mountain together. If you reach the top without them you have failed.

## **Lesson #3 – Keep your eye on the whole herd.**

As we approach the top of the trail and our final destination, I ride in the middle of the herd so that I can keep the center strong and push the front if needed. From that perspective I am able to see the entire herd stretched out across the mountain top. As I watch John moving from the back to the front, I notice that he is strongly leading from the middle. He leads from all over because this gives him the most balanced perspective. Because of this style of leadership, he knows where the problems were going to happen before they do. When there is an issue, he is quick to respond.

The old thinking of leading from the front is gone just like the pioneer in the Old West. Your leadership strength in your business, community, family and work comes from your ability to see the entire picture and then execute based on the total of the information available. How narrow is the view if you are only riding the in the front or in the back? When I watch John lead us I realize that we were being successful because he understood our abilities and placed us in positions where we were strongest. He then was able to let us do our work while observing the big picture. True leaders work the project from all angles.



The Ranch is an experience that changes your perspective. Out there you understand that you can not dwell on your mistakes or you may lose cattle. The way to success is to stay flexible, lead from the middle while understanding the needs of your customer –the cows. Also remember, if you graze in the same spot for too long and you will end up with a mouthful of dirt so keep trying new things to improve yourself and your business.

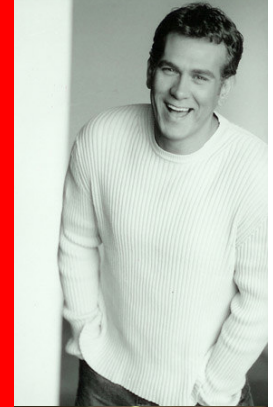
By the way, if you don't fall off the horse you are just not riding hard enough!

[www.toddmitchem.com](http://www.toddmitchem.com)

[www.mitcheminteractive.com](http://www.mitcheminteractive.com)

Todd Mitchem

[info@mitcheminteractive.com](mailto:info@mitcheminteractive.com)



**Mentoring Programs**

**Business Development**

**Workshops**

**DVD – Hey DJ...FOCUS!**