



Know Your Horse, Know Yourself

By Tim Hayes

Many years ago I realized there were parts of my life that weren't working the way I wanted. No matter how many times I tried to fix the situation, nothing changed. I found myself saying: "this still isn't working. I can't believe this is happening again." The situations that were not working all involved other people. At first I thought it was the other person's fault. Then I thought I was just choosing the wrong people. However even when I switched to what seemed like a better choice, it still wasn't working. (Reread this paragraph and substitute the word "people" with "horse"). I decided to do something I found extremely uncomfortable. I asked for help. It was amazing. Asking for help turned out to be very helpful.

This is some of what I learned. I was told I was stuck. The problem was not in the people or situations I was choosing, it was in me, the "chooser". Since I couldn't replace the chooser, I had to readjust it. I had to change. But what about me needed to be different? I remember thinking there must be things about me, certain qualities of my personality, causing me to be stuck that maybe I was unaware of or couldn't see. But I knew who I was. How could I not be aware of my personality?

My next thought was a breakthrough for me. I realized there was a part of my body I not only couldn't see but had never been able to see; the back of my head. The only way I was able to see the back of my head was with the help of a mirror, two of them in fact. What if, I thought, there were parts of my personality I was also unable to see. Then I would need a mirror for my personality. Some place where it showed up and I could view it. My personality always showed up in my relationships. Other people became my mirrors.

The truth is there are parts of my personality I'm not aware of or can't see. Some have been with me my whole life. There are only two ways I can discover what they are. The first way is very simple but takes a lot of courage. I can ask people I trust to give me feedback about me. How do I occur to them. How do I occur to society? When I start hearing the same thing from a few different sources, I'm probably hearing the truth. To change it, first I need to see it.

The second method creates less vulnerability but requires me to be extremely aware of my thoughts and feelings and rigorously honest with myself. I call this method "If you spot it, you got it." This is how it works: whenever I'm aware of something in another person that annoys me, bothers me, or makes me uncomfortable; it is also something I do, something I used to do or something I'm going to do sometime in the future. I have found after many years this method is true 100% of the time.

The benefits of this method are twofold: if someone says or does something that bothers me, I stop judging and criticizing them and begin examining myself. I discover that the same bothersome things are also in me. Instead of trying to get them to be different or

change, I have to change and be a different way first. Now what does all this have to do with horses?

Having a relationship with a horse is no different than having a relationship with another person. It's either comfortable, uncomfortable or a little of both. Spotting the undesirable behavior of other people shows me what I need to change in myself. Spotting the undesirable behavior in my horse also shows me what I need to change in myself to cause him to change.

AWARENESS

I first became aware of how horses mirror humans years ago on my friend's cattle ranch in southern Idaho. The family's horses were in 3 separate corrals in front of the main house. I didn't know very much about horses at this time but it was apparent that the horses in each of the 3 corrals reacted differently as I approached them. In one they acted anxious when I approached. The next one they were relaxed and calm and the third one they were very playful.

I went inside and asked my friend Penny how and why the horses were separated. I expected her to say something like the mares were in one, geldings and stallions in the other two. She said the first corral had Jay, her husband's horses, the next were hers and the third were her two boys. I immediately thought about the day before when I had been out riding with the family. Jay could be pretty rough with his horse sometimes. Penny was gentle and the boys were like; well, boys. They loved to play. The horses reacted to me (another human) by mirroring the same personality characteristics as their human partners. Jay's horses were anxious, Penny's were calm, Mark and Scott's were playful.

The reason horses are wonderful mirrors for humans are because in many ways we are very much alike. In fact, except for the obvious differences and the fact that they don't speak English, horses are just like us. Most of the time the way they treat each other



Tim in Idaho, 1994.

exudes the qualities most human relationships only aspire to possess: truthfulness, kindness, acceptance, tolerance, respect, fairness and forgiveness.

Like humans, horses have thoughts, feelings, wants, needs, fears, parents, children and a whole life. Their brains are much smaller but their hearts are much bigger. Small brains free them from the self-consciousness and manipulations of an ego. If they're afraid or angry they tell us immediately. Unlike humans, they never pretend to be one way in order to get something. Horses never lie. Their superior survival abilities have given them the best memories of every animal save for the elephant. If we let them down, they never forget but with their big hearts, they always forgive. The three factors imperative in having a positive relationship with another human are identical to those we must have with our horse: love, trust and respect. If all three are not present, the relationship will not work.

When a horse resists or does not respond positively to a request, most people see that as something being wrong with the horse that

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Two Sixty Four, trained by Rodney Jenkins, won the \$75,000 Alex M. Robb Handicap Dec. 28 at Aqueduct. Jenkins dominated the show jumping ring from the 1960s into the 1980s, winning more than 70 Grand Prix events (including the Hampton Classic), riding on Nations Cup teams and also showing hunters. In the late 1980s he began training racehorses.

Jockey Norberto Arroyo, Jr. celebrated the new year by winning the first four races Jan. 1 at Aqueduct. The 29-year-old rider from Puerto Rico said it was "a great way to start the year."

Achilles of Troy set a record in the Count Fleet Jan. 7, finishing the one mile, 70 yard race in a time of 1:39-3/5 and surpassing Carry My Colors' 1:38-4/5 in 2000. He also gave jockey Alan Garcia his second consecutive Count Fleet win; Garcia won last year aboard Scrappy T. Achilles of Troy is a Kentucky-bred trained by Jennifer Pedersen. The 3-year-old might show up in this year's Kentucky Derby. Some good prospects have come out of the Count Fleet, including Smarty Jones.

Strummer, ridden by Norberto Arroyo, Jr., won the Jimmy Winkfield at 6 furlongs on Jan. 16, Martin Luther King Day. The race, formerly known as the Best Turn, was renamed last year to honor Hall of Fame African-American jockey Jimmy Winkfield, who won the Kentucky Derby two years in a row (1901 and 1902).

Allaire C. Du Pont of Maryland died Jan. 6 at age 92. Mrs. Du Pont was the owner of Kelso, Horse of the Year for 5 years (1960-64). After his retirement, she rode him on hunts. Although her daughter, Olympic rider Lana du Pont, was afraid he would run away with her, Mrs. Du Pont claimed that Kelso was a perfect gentleman.

According to Equibase News Service, Todd Pletcher, John Velazquez and Michael Gill topped the list in 2005 as leading trainer, jockey and owner, respectively. Saint Liam led all the thoroughbreds in 2005 with earnings of \$3,696,960.

Racing continues throughout the winter at Aqueduct. For information call 718-641-4700.

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needs to be changed or fixed. On the contrary, spotting negative/resistant/uncooperative behavior is spotting the horse mirroring back to us how he is feeling about our behavior. Something we're doing or not doing is causing our horse to tell us, in the only way he knows how: *physical resistance*. He's telling us that we need to change.

If my horse seems "stubborn", he's actually telling me over and over that I'm not listening to what he's trying to communicate to me. If asked him to slow down by pulling back on the reins and he doesn't, he may be telling me I'm pulling too hard and to lighten up. Maybe I haven't earned his respect and he's telling me that he's enjoying going fast and I should listen to him. If my horse acts anxious or spooky he's asking me to trust him and believe him by acknowledging that something (including me!) is causing him to be fearful and that he's not being silly or stupid. He's saying he needs his leader (me) to help and reassure him so he can carry on.

When I experience how my partner, (horse or human) is relating to me, if it's positive, I'm doing something right. If it's negative, I'm doing something wrong. If I'm not getting what I asked for, if my partner makes it obvious that he'd rather not stay with me or if I try and force him to change, he will always resist and resent me. If however I know myself, know my weaknesses, listen to him and understand what he's saying, then I can offer him a different and hopefully better response. He'll change and behave differently because he'll see I've changed and behaved differently. Then we're communicating. Then our relationship is positive. We're riding together in harmony. We're having fun, we're safe and this is what both of us have truly always wanted.

"Take time to listen to what is said without words." — Lao Tzu

*All Tim's event's are listed in the event section of this magazine and on the net at www.LEquine.com. To host a Clinic or for help with your horse contact Tim at: 631-329-5840 or atmeus22@aol.com; www.hayesisforhorse.com
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VITAMINS & MINERALS IN FORAGE

In the fall of 2004, one of the horses in Cazenovia College's equine studies program began abruptly showing noticeable neurological symptoms, characterized by muscular incoordination and acute weight loss over a short period of time. These symptoms can point to a number of diagnoses - including West Nile virus, equine protozoal myelitis and strains of equine encephalitis. Blood taken from the animal indicated he suffered from extreme vitamin E deficiency.

"Our eventual diagnosis of the horse's issue was Equine Motor Neuron Disease, which is caused by a vitamin E deficiency," reported Carol Buckhout, Assistant Professor of Equine Business Management at Cazenovia College in N.Y. "We discovered that we had a wide spread problem with low blood levels of vitamin E."

Equine Motor Neuron Disease (EMND), first diagnosed in 1990, is a rare neurodegenerative disorder of the somatic lower motor neurons in the spinal cord that affects the nervous and muscular systems.

The disease is classified as an oxidative disorder, usually affecting adult horses. Horses become weak and experience muscle wasting, symptomized by fine muscle fasciculations, course trembling of the limb muscles. After ten years, a team of researchers at Cornell University found the disease was caused by a vitamin E deficiency. Afflicted horses had a history of being off pasture for extended periods of time. Pasture is an excellent source of vitamin E, but vitamin E content can be deficient due to losses during harvest and storage.

Vitamin E is an antioxidant, well known to protect against oxidative damage. Treating EMND-afflicted horses with Vitamin E can lead to some improvement, but complete recovery is unlikely.

Buckhout, who teaches courses in equine nutrition, anatomy and reproductive physiology at Cazenovia, has become an advocate of having equine forages analyzed to better understand the content, and thereby enabling adjustments to be made in the feed mixture.

"Since we live in a selenium deficient area and purchase local forages for horses, the forages are below the horses' requirements for selenium," said Buckhout. "While the selenium levels for the same horses were acceptable, they were on the low side of acceptable."

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Poetry Corner

By Paula Timpson

haiku

*horse,
you fall silent
each time the wind blows
you listen
and find
grace
within-
my heart spins
because you love me..
i see in your twinkling eyes,
peace
rainbows when i close my eyes...*



*Ballerina philly, 4 days old
paulaspotryministry.tripod.com*