



# Thomas Herding Technique

Discovering the Communicated Equine

*Emotional Conformation, Behavioral Genetics...*

*And The*

*Herd Dynamics*



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*And The*

***Herd Dynamics***

The Following is Part of the:  
**THT Equine Education Seminar Series**

***The Herd Dynamics advanced series***

*Presents:*

**Growth, Learning, Wellness,  
*Nature's Communicative Intention***

“Being an Innovator means you lead with your imagination, introduce new concepts and learn through experimentation... *Pioneering innovative concepts for today, tomorrow and beyond..., that's THT.*”

***Kerry M Thomas, Founder***



## **THT Herd Dynamic Tip**

*“Training the high-level horse means creating Herd Dynamics-of-Motion that both target and nurture mental aptitude and growth.” THT*

### **Survival by Association**

Herd survival is highly dependent on learned experiences, or what we may call *memories*. These *memories* are experiences that are not forgotten but rather overlaid by others, each having their own unique associated trigger that serves to allow instant recall so that a survival-based reaction, or non-reaction, can be employed. In such a way both direct or indirect associations to a layered triggered response can be automatically recalled so that needed reaction, and as similar stimulus occurs over time - (allowing the horse to learn the difference between a wind-blown sage brush and an actual predator running at them) - *anticipation*, can be had that allows the horse to survive first, ask questions later. The key lay within the mental aptitude of the horse and their level of both herd and environmental communication. You do not *erase* an associated memory or associated trigger, you *overlay* with similar stimuli while requiring an alternative reaction. Keeping these concepts in mind, once you identify your horse's Emotional Conformation, you are ready to *train-forward* with naturally occurring *target & anticipation* herd dynamics of motion which nurture the horse, as you endeavor to develop the athlete.

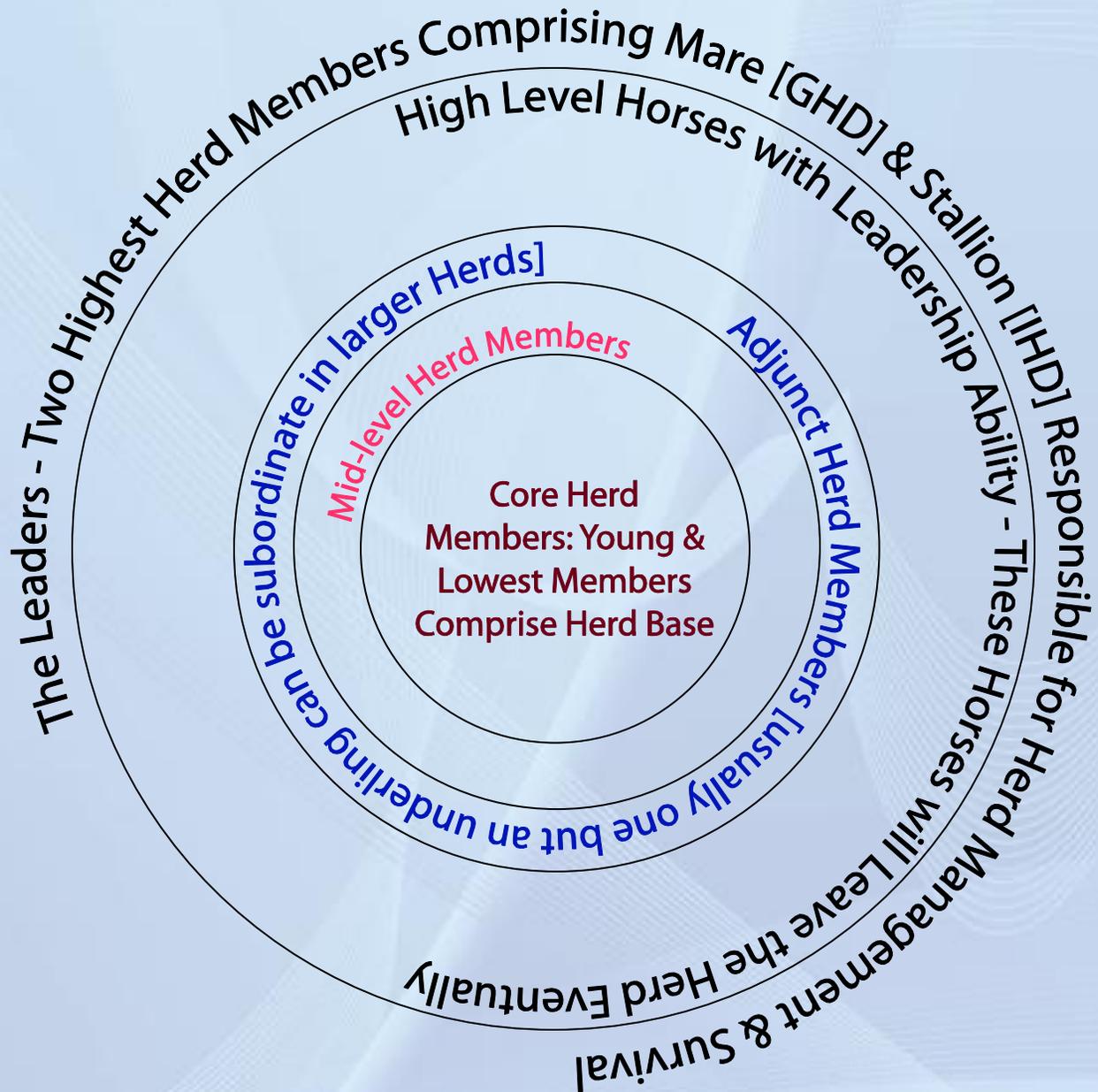
*“Behavioral Genetic Breeding can maintain the physical integrity of the family line while breeding a more trainable mind...”*

Kerry M Thomas/Founder of THT



# Dynamics of the Herd

## The Fabric of Life



## Dynamics of the Herd; the Fabric of Life

### Chart Notes

Communication key to herd survival is within the shared leadership roles of the lead horses; this is possible without conflict because Mother Nature employs two different leadership styles that act as a cohesive unit at the top levels: IHD & GHD. The Mare dynamic is more focused on that of nurturing the group in space and motion; thus the female *herd dynamic* is geared more toward a Group Herd Dynamic (GHD). The Stallion has a more individualized propensity owing to the protective of herd and space roles that Stallions play in the family group. This more *targeted* type of focus (targeting threats as well as stragglers) is identified as being Individual Herd Dynamic (IHD). Stallions can become very overprotective of their space because of their IHD.

The *body of the herd* is generally made up of five layers and each communicates with the other in a *chain-of-command* structure which allows for optimum efficiency and survival. Emerging members of the herd jostle for position almost daily in sometimes subtle, sometimes lavish displays of body language and infractions of space. A family herd generally is made up of 4 to 7 members at any given moment but circumstances of course dictate actual numbers.

The core or *base* of the herd is comprised of the lowest standing members at any given moment along with the young. The next layer are those mid-level horses who are themselves always at risk to challenges of position from the base members and thus can be flip-flopped at any given moment and any number of times; 80% of horses fall into these two categories behaviorally.

The next level horse is the key member of the herd between the underlings and the herd leadership, the *adjunct*, or better stated, the *team captain*. Because of this horse's position and unique ability to communicate fluently with *intent & body language*, it is the most commonly but falsely recognized *herd leader*. The job of the adjunct is to act as liaison between the lead horses and the rest of the herd members especially during motion. In this manner the highest level horses can communicate their demands to the herd without themselves being discovered by predators. In such a way Mother Nature has done well to hide her true leaders so that the survival of the herd is secure. (Adjunct horses rarely seek or desire to move up).

Above the adjunct and just below the actual herd leaders are high level herd members who have only one role; waiting. They play little or no part in herd motion unless challenging the *in-place* Stallion or Mare for top position. If this position is untenable they will eventually either be pushed out of their *Vice-Presidency* to start their own herd or move into bachelor herds, or lay in waiting for an older or infirm leader to eventually give way. Thus a leadership structure is never wont. Leaderless herds are not in nature's design.



## THT Herd Dynamic Tip

“Emotional Conformation Profiling & Behavioral Genetic Research: *because the mental capacity of the equine controls the physical output of the athlete.*”

Herd Dynamics Governing Bodies rest within the high level of the Individual Herd Dynamic (IHD) of the superior male and the Group Herd Dynamic (GHD) of the superior female. Emotional Conformation (EC) Profiling identifies the inherent behavioral markers of selected individual horses for a wide array of applications including their potential and mental aptitude. Behavioral Genetic Breeding programs apply EC to mate selections for more natural herd development and management. (*Behavioral Genetic Profiling studies the horse in relation to behavioral genetic family markers, EC profiles the individuals.*)

### Top Level IHD Indicators

Self Awareness / Space Management / Targeted Intent to Control Body-Language & Space / Into-Space Propensity indicative of *Stair-Climber* motion with Controlled Anticipation, Target & Release Focus Ability / Seeming aloofness to non-threatening space violations / Presence of Character & Silent Leadership / Influences in-space reactions at variable ranges...

### Top Level GHD Indicators

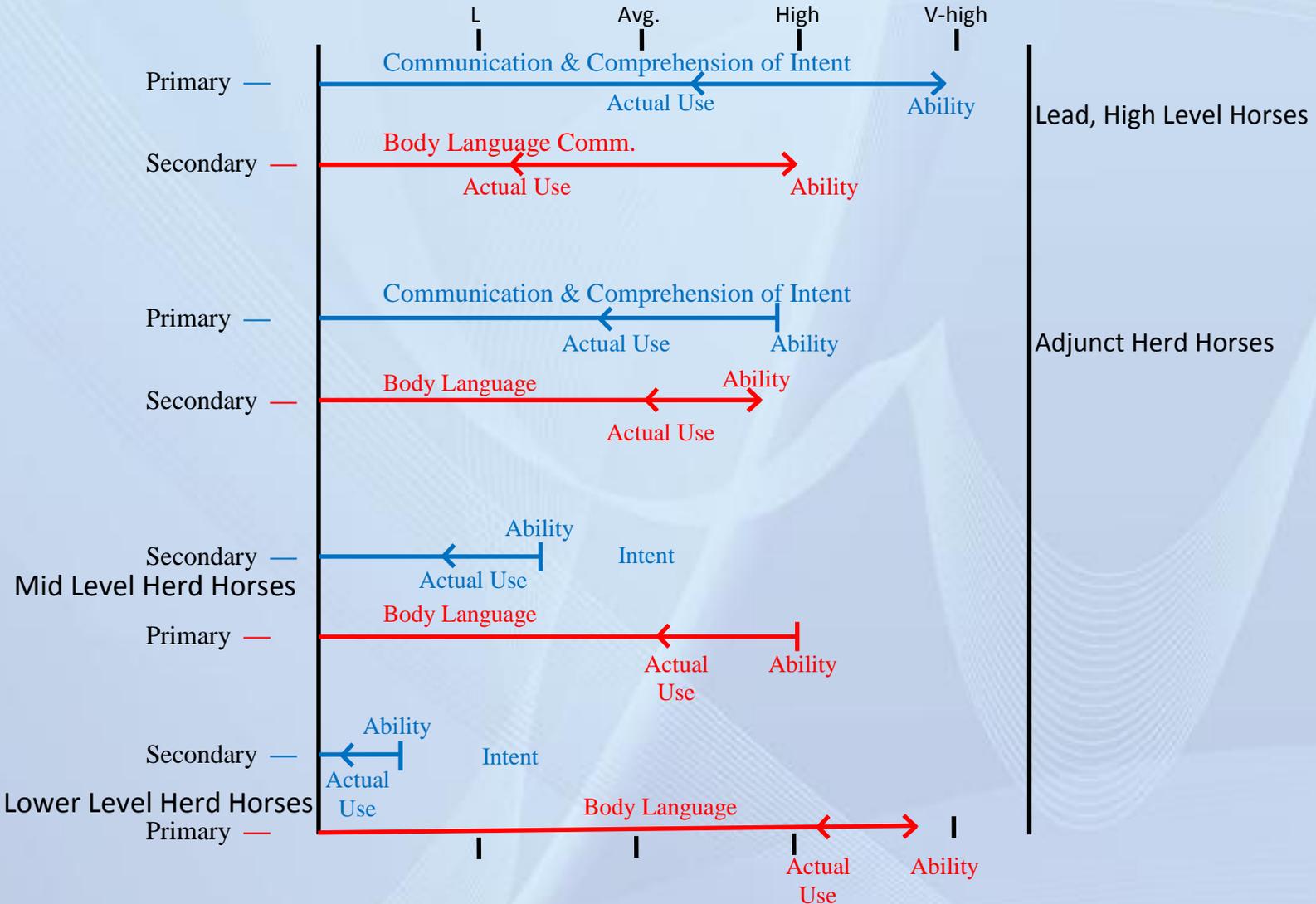
Total Herd or Group Awareness / Ability to monitor the herd by *reading* all members' intent at a given moment / Toleration & Nurturing of individual herd members / Communicates almost exclusively with intent / Manages Herd Motion by both identifying & influencing intent and body-language > Once *read* will push through or go around the herd to either lead or direct space and motion of younger or faster horses / Manages motion by managing space...

\*NOTE: Developing leadership propensities are often hidden though identifiable in immature horses and it is vital to remember that their patterns of behavior are reflected within their patterns of motion. This reality makes it necessary to train forward on two fronts: Develop the athlete, nurture the horse... Once physical peak is reached, the only forward progress your athlete can make is the advancement of their mental aptitude.

Kerry M Thomas/Founder of THT



## Equine Communication Dialects of Influence Expression Chart



The expression chart indicates the comprehension & communication inclinations of Herd Horses at various levels & their degrees of dialect.



## Equine Communication:

### *Dialects of Influence - Expression Chart Notes*

“Intent over space is the definitive equine communication; body language is the result of this intent, less body language, stronger intent...”

Communication between the various layers of the herd is the key to herd survival and sustainability. The differentiating factor between the levels of individual horses within the herd unit rests within the individual’s capacity to communicate. Equine communication comes in two *dialects*; Intention & Body Language. Because Body-Language is governed by Intent, *intent* is the highest form of communication needing only minimal or often times zero accompanying body-language accents to influence another horse or horses in space; sedentary or moving.

As noted on the chart both *primary & secondary* dialects of communication for the various levels of the herd play a key role between members while allowing structure and *chain-of-command*. Identifying the communication *dialect* of the horse is the first step into a deeper understanding of the individual horse, their strengths and weaknesses alike. The ability to communicate and comprehend what is being communicated is itself the singular piece of the puzzle that both inhibits mental growth and learning and elevates the horse.

Mental Blocks such as Behavioral Overcompensations and other aberrations do not come purely from actual experience but rather the interpretation of them. Communication is the key to interpretation and happens on various levels in various ways; find the key to an individual’s communication and you unlock their true potential.

All learning and mental growth happen by and within the communicative interpretation of stimulus and layered experiences.



## THT Herd Dynamic Tip

*“Patterns of behavior, translate into patterns of motion...”*

### THT Research & Services: The Fundamentals

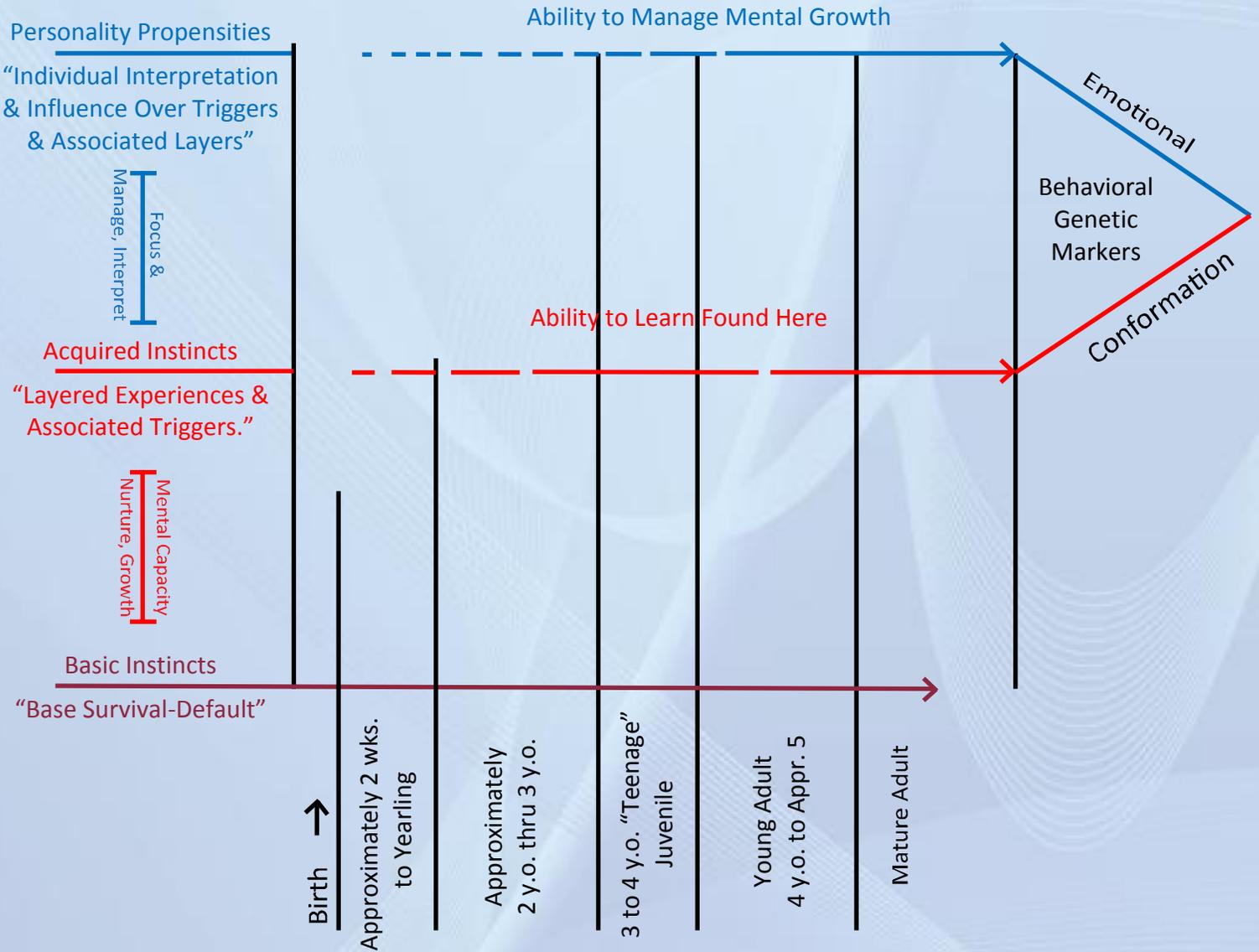
Basic Instinct (Nature’s inherent survival tools & default position) + Acquired Instincts (Emotional Conformation/layered mental growth) + Individual Propensities (behavioral genetic blend of family with individual accents of “self”; how the individual interprets the layering of associated triggers as in how you react to what you know or experience) = The Layers of the Emotional Horse....

*“You must endeavor to be understanding, before you seek to be understood...”*

Kerry M Thomas/Founder of THT



# The Emotional Horse; Mental Aptitude, the Layers of Growth & Learning



\* Ages are approximate only - Individuals will vary



## The Emotional Horse:

### *Mental Aptitude, the Layers of Growth & Learning Chart Notes*

Mentally the horse is nurtured and grows in layers of experiences or *memories*, which the Acquired Instincts (AI) is overlaying the Basic Instincts which are inherent at birth. As time goes by the horse begins to perpetuate mental growth and expand their experiences as they begin to venture farther on their own allowing for an individual spin associated with these layered experiences. The horse here begins to define itself, cultivating *Personality Propensities*. Internal and efficient communication between the three is necessary for the horse's optimum wellness and potential.

The precocial horse is born with their innate instincts of survival, fight or flight, allowing the horse on an immediate basis the best chance they can have for surviving. Soon the young horse begins to differentiate between stimuli it commonly experiences and within this *interpretation* the act of learning takes place. The Acquired Instincts are *learned* instincts and allow the young horse to begin to identify the differences, as an example, between having to run away from a predator and merely looking at a sage bush blowing across the ground. This is the area of *assimilation*, where associated triggers overlay similar experiences and mental aptitude and growth potential lie. As more triggers and associated stimuli are layered, the burgeoning personality unique to each horse begins to further develop, managing the Acquired Instincts.

All horses are very similar in the first two ingredients of their Emotional State; Basic Instincts layered with Acquired Instincts and the ability to assimilate to environments in order to survive. The fork in the road is within the developing and very individualized *Personality Propensity* of the horse. This is the individual's interpretation, their *spin*, on the Acquired Instincts and associated triggers. In short, this is how the horse individually manages mental growth and experience, divides the levels of the herd members and manages how well they communicate.

*Basic Instinct* is the default survival-guide for the horse. *Acquired Instincts* are relative to mental capacity where the horse is nurtured and emotional growth occurs. *Personality Propensity* is the horse's ability to focus, manage and interpret. Like two people who experience the same stimuli can express or interpret said experience in different ways. It displays a great deal about each individual horse and *who* they are and are likely to become in a given circumstance; mental aptitude.

Emotional Conformation Profiling is the study of both the Acquired Instincts & the Personality Propensities. Identifying behavioral genetic markers found within individual patterns of behavior, are the ingredients of the horse's psychology.



## **THT Herd Dynamic Tip**

*“Proper interpretation of body language rests within the ability to identify intent”*

### **Fabric of the Horse**

Among the most overlooked and underutilized aspects of horses is the reality that understanding and *training* the horse, whether athlete or therapy, has to be approached from two fronts. You develop the athlete, you nurture the horse. This is especially true of the Thoroughbred Race Horse. No true program is complete without an understanding that physical conditioning allows the horse to cover the distance; mental conditioning allows the horse to control their space... Emotional Conformation Profiling & Behavioral Genetic Breeding Research thus applied is among the most important, and relevant parts of a program. The economics of behavior simply make sense.

*“Forget the paper, see the horse...”*

Kerry M Thomas/Founder of THT



# Thomas Herding Technique

## Discovering the Communicated Equine

### THT Herd Dynamic Tip

*“Communication is the key that unlocks the individual within the herd...”*

The highest level of communication within the herd is the ability to anticipate intent. This is why in a race, *a herd of horses in motion*, we see that there are some horse's who can part the seas and others that are parted and some that simply embrace the whole, able to go through or around.

Herd animals that travel in such close proximity have to be able to comprehend the intentions of the other moving parts; some defer, others impressing their will in subtle, nearly automatic transfers of control over space. Knowing how the individual is likely to react is the key to proper management and leadership. Communication is the tool that transfers and translates information, how well your horse does this is something you need to know for it governs their physical output. It is not their physical ability that determines their level within the herd but rather their mental aptitude; their level of communication, which in turn categorizes the members and governs their relationships. Physical ability alone cannot itself sustain herd survival it is a tool managed by the Behavioral Genetics, the *Emotional Conformation* of the horse. Discovering the communicated equine is your first step to unlocking their true potential.

Identifying an individual's behavioral genetic markers, squarely placed within their communication capacity, is a key element to understanding the horse you train, purchase and breed, be it for racing or therapy. Because patterns of behavior impact any group activity; herd or team, knowing these patterns and how they are communicated is the key to your success and a powerful tool. Emotional Conformation Profiling can help you put that key, in your pocket.

*“You will never truly find your comfort zones until you allow yourself,*

*To be uncomfortable...”*

*Kerry M Thomas, Founder*

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