

Thomas Herding Technique

Discovering the Communicated Equine

A View From The Hoof

Introduction to THT's Reflective Learning Therapy:

Using Horses to Promote Healing and Emotional Wellness in Humans

By:

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Horses tell us things about ourselves and about others by the way they *react* to our approach, our *frame of mind*. A study of *Herd Dynamics* and equine communication is far more detailed than anything we see on the surface, and in fact, there is a great deal more that horses have yet to share with us, their human associates. Horses can act as mirrors to our emotions. They read our intent, our body language, and immediately know far more about us as individuals than we would like the world to know at times. But this is also a powerful tool, a cathartic, therapeutic journey of emotional wellness based within inter-species communication. The horse is an ally in the quest for wellness. Communication is a key to learning; and the horse is a great communicator.

The same communication tools used to develop and nurture the athlete are used to define and nurture the human in reflection. Perhaps the greatest gift the horse has to share with us is not on the racetrack or within the dressage ring, but rather as teacher, a guide on an internal journey. The horse reflecting our emotions is vital information that I myself have used in developing interactive programs for children with disadvantages such as being blind or autistic. The horse is a great translator of otherwise seemingly unexpressed emotions, good and bad, and inasmuch becomes the emotional *voice* for those who cannot, or refuse, to speak. Developing a therapy program based on *Herd Dynamics* & equine communication allows the therapist to monitor the progress, establish a platform and develop a unique *reflective learning* protocol with the horse as the translator.

Because horses have different individual herd dynamics and specialties, it is important to pick the right horse. For example, in situations where expression and communication are compromised, the herd translator, or *adjunct*, makes the best therapy horse. It is also important to comprehend the different *specialties* between the male, or *Individual Herd Dynamic* and female, or *Group Herd Dynamic*. Male therapy horses have more to offer individuals with focused, singular issues, either physical or emotional. Whereas female horses are able to embrace a wider range of contingent issues. The horse as therapist can open the door for emotional growth & wellness through the translation of their *Emotional Conformation*. Reading their language can open an otherwise concealed path to human wellness.

“Assimilation to life’s complexities and challenges is rooted within one’s ability to communicate; it is with man, it is with horse.” Kerry M Thomas

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