

The Neigh Sayers

Healing With Horses

Linda Leary

"You cannot fool a horse. They possess a clairsentience and a way of acting like an equine biofeedback mechanism, mirroring the true emotional state of the human with whom they interact." — Melisa Pearce

I was not sure at the time what had actually transpired many years ago, when I was leaning into a 20-year-old mare, my arms wrapped around her neck, crying my eyes out. I had just heard of the sudden death of a dear friend and mentor and my shock was mind numbing. I called my friend, Melisa Pearce, who ordered me to come out to her ranch immediately. New to horses at that time, I had no idea what to expect.

When I arrived, she had one of her brood mares standing in the indoor arena. She instructed me to go up to the mare, wrap my arms around her neck and just tell her what I was feeling. The moment my arms went around her neck my knees almost buckled and I began to sob uncontrollably. The mare smacked her lips, lowered her head to accommodate me and "held" me. Soon, I experienced the warmth of her massive body, her horsey smell and something else — comfort and nurturance. I felt "heard." Although no words had been spoken, this brown-eyed equine wise woman had relieved me of the weight of my initial shock and grief. That was the beginning of my journey to a realm of horses much different than the one Roy Rogers rode into the sunset.

I had explored different avenues of healing and personal transformation via seminars, holistic trainings, yoga and meditations, and found this new arena absolutely fascinating. It was a surprise that grooming these glorious creatures and cleaning out a horse stall with flies buzzing around my head could be so therapeutic — much better than basket weaving. I relished my time learning more about these exquisite animals at the ranch with Melisa.

"As a child," Melisa says, "I always considered horses not just as pets but as valuable contributors to my learning. Today they are truly co-creators in the healing work I do with clients, both here and across the country. You cannot fool a horse. They possess a clairsentience and a way of acting like an equine biofeedback mechanism, mirroring the true emotional state

of the human with whom they interact. They live in the moment, and it is essential to be fully present while working with them or they will command your attention in ways that may not always be pleasant. It is as if they are saying, 'You are missing the experience of being with me right here, right now.' When you are present and align yourself with your equine partner in a position of trust, you open a space where the horse can bring about what is needed naturally for healing and transformation."

For Melisa, all healing is the beginning of a new journey — for both horse and human. She represents the horse at an intuitive level and her horses are, indeed, very special. They are nurtured and specially trained in a supportive environment and they seem to love the work they do with clients — more so than performing in some arena doing repetitive patterned routines for a blue ribbon. Melisa communicates and makes agreements with her equine partners and they with her. When everyone keeps their agreements the partnerships run smoothly.

Sound strange? Perhaps, but I have witnessed a thousand pounds of raw horsepower demonstrate an almost supernatural gentleness by bonding with and honoring the vulnerability of a woman deeply wounded by a past experience. Once that woman surrendered to her equine partner and something higher within herself, a transformation and healing occurred leaving all present touched, moved and inspired. I swear that horse was smiling. The client was grinning widely and years seemed to have evaporated from her face.

It does not matter what the dynamics of the issues are. Melisa and her "maned co-facilitators" work with families, individuals and corporations encompassing the gamut of human dis-ease — physical, emotional, social and of the spirit. It was not long before the word spread that Melisa could also "read" the emotional health of horses, and she began doing equine readings at what she calls "Equispiritual

Evenings." In the beginning Melisa herself was amazed at how accurate her readings were, even long distance using only a photograph of the horse. Past abuse revealed itself frequently and once the horse felt "heard" and understood, many deviant behaviors disappeared. Melisa became not only a human therapist but an equine one as well.

Today we seem to be living in a world where communication consists largely of computer screens, phone texting and relentless commercials for drugs that, if you think you can survive the side effects, will temporarily relieve depression, high blood pressure, allergies and our experience of life. Is it any wonder we are feeling out of touch with ourselves? Like our Native American elders before us, are we turning once again to the wisdom of the four-footed and winged ones, listening to a different, albeit not new, message of survival and healing? I, for one, hope so.



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Linda Leary believes in the power of the written word. She writes for Boulder Women's Magazine, Chicken Soup, local newspapers, is an editor for two online newsletters, and works with clients to bring distinction to their bios, web texts and brochures. Writing for peace and prosperity is her mission. siouxlu@comcast.net