

# Health Benefits of Being with Horses

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**I**n a world overflowing with gifts, many of which we often forget the miracle of – such as water, the five senses, a flower, sunshine and starlight – being able to interact with a horse is truly a powerful and transformative gift among them.

In a similar way that spending quality time with a child or infant opens up certain qualities in an adult – like peace, joy and playfulness – that they may not otherwise experience, so being with a horse can be a powerful, deepening and even life-changing thing. The presence of this ancient, powerful, graceful and dignified creature activates certain inner qualities and states in a person that are not often easily felt in modern life.

Spending time around horses is known to stop depression, anxiety and the general state of ‘fight or flight’ that so many people live in today with such detriment to health and well-being. It is now common to hear stories of people with various disabilities, at-risk youth, war veterans and people with PTSD to name a few, finding deep healing and well-being through interaction with horses.

The horse has fed, clothed and literally carried humanity through wars and conquests of foreign lands, made farming and transport possible and maybe now is being called upon to heal and re-calibrate the soul of humanity. How is this possible and what is this twinned destiny of equine and mankind about?

Communication in a horse herd is a natural and mostly pure template that has sustained a resilient and adaptable equine species for 50 million years, about 47 millions years before the first known human genetic appeared on Earth.

In most parts of the world, we humans now live in a brain-dominated society that has grown out of balance and out of sync with its environment. So, by connecting with the intelligence of the equine ways of communication and leadership, we can retrain, reassemble and re-synchronize those parts of us that are so out of balance.

It usually makes a big impression on a person when they discover that they can cause a 1,000 lb, fast and powerful creature to want to follow their every move, even without words or physical force!

The horse also acts like a biofeedback machine, reflecting back the inner state of others. So a person can experience in a very visceral way how much their inner state (especially when made conscious) of a person in leadership affects the responses and abilities of those they wish to lead.

A person who wishes to expand their training in leadership will discover how flexibility, fluidity, responsiveness, openness, neutrality, close observation and a genuine interest in others brings clarity and strength within oneself, thus creating greater conductivity and easement between all people involved.

Some examples of what working with our horses causes in people that I've observed are:

- 🐾 Increased confidence and comfortability in self
- 🐾 Better ability to create boundaries, to say no and to respect one's own needs
- 🐾 Ability to be more simple and clear in one's communication
- 🐾 Ability to magnetise parts of oneself, such as having a clear intention and plan and then carrying it out in a way that others can and want to follow
- 🐾 Better skills of concentration; being fully in the present moment with attention to detail as well as the larger ecology (both physical and energetic)
- 🐾 More in control of one's inner states – nerves, emotions, thoughts
- 🐾 More awareness of what one causes in others
- 🐾 Less reactive, more responsive to need
- 🐾 More trust in oneself

Let's look at a practical level. What are some areas of training and adjustments that a person needs to make in order to really connect with a horse?

- 🐾 Slowing down one's movements, breathing and thoughts
- 🐾 Expanding one's state of awareness to include the entire ecology
- 🐾 Becoming more deliberate in one's movements and the information they convey
- 🐾 Getting into a rhythm of 'call and response' or 'pressure and release' that is the basis for all horse communication
- 🐾 Quieting oneself both verbally and energetically
- 🐾 Taking charge of one's emotions through breath and calming practices
- 🐾 Becoming more centered, grounded and strong in the body
- 🐾 Developing fluidity, continuity, regularity and cohesiveness between one's inner state and outer actions
- 🐾 Becoming ambidextrous and using the right and left hemispheres of the brain in concert
- 🐾 Removing ambition from oneself – becoming more process-oriented and less goal-oriented



Even interacting with a horse in such a simple task as grooming them will naturally evoke these adjustments in many people, with only a few basic instructions and guidelines from an experienced horse person. It is an intuitive exchange that grows with every interaction as a person comes to realize that in this world of the horse, it does not matter so much what you know

or how fast you can do something or how you look. What truly matters is what is inside your

heart and mind, how much you trust your instinct, your body and your feelings, as well as your ability to flow in rhythmic response as a part of the herd, no longer holding yourself as a completely separate entity.

And for some horses, it also matters whether a person carries themselves with dignity and grace, for such is the dance that they most willingly and artfully follow. For these particular horse characters, some more advanced levels of horse communication skills include:

- 🐾 The ability to shift from total, throughout stillness to intensity of action and back again in moments, with correct timing, fairness, clear reasoning and according to need
- 🐾 The ability to bring into unity the various levels of oneself – the physical, emotional, mental, intuitive and creative parts of a person, all working together in concert without contradiction or distraction – so that the personal presence is fully harnessed to a clear purpose and intention
- 🐾 To become an essence carrier of the feeling and knowing that all life is interconnected, and that mutual enhancement, softness, fluidity, call and response and allowance are natural ways of leadership on the this blue planet Earth.

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