

TOMORROW'S LIFE COACH

Institute for Life Coach Training

Horsemanship and Coaching

Horses have been a powerful influence in my life! Like a mirror, they have reflected back to me my own magnificence as well as those areas in need of improvement. All of this has been done without judgment. This parallels what happens in the coaching partnership.

While working with my horses I have learned about powerful communication. My horses respond better when I can talk with them, rather than at them. This means that I have the responsibility of learning their language. And rather than forcing the horse to perform, I support the horse to achieve optimum performance.

When I was a new coach I was eager for my clients to have powerful outcomes. My attachment to this idea resulted in me being forceful with my clients. This proved to be ineffective. I began to ponder the connection between how I communicate with my horses to how I might communicate with clients.

Fortunately, I was able to reconnect with my skill of communication with my horses. Only then could I find a way to be with my client in a non-judgmental way. I was able to release my need for the client to have a powerful outcome. My horses have had many amazing outcomes, as I have been able to be aware of how I could offer support.

My horse Phantom is very sensitive. He does not respond when he has too much pressure placed upon him and will actually become frozen and tune out. As I learned to notice these clues and find ways to support him, he was able to let go of his fear. Only then, could we communicate effectively. As we have deepened our partnership, he has amazed me with his ability to perform at optimum levels.

Last June, I took Phantom to a local horse show. I made a deal with him that we would just go and have fun. I really didn't care if we won a ribbon. I showed him barefoot and used a very gentle snaffle bit. Phantom was 19 years old then. Most horse people would say that he was too old and that I couldn't possibly get good performance from him with a gentle bit and no shoes on his hooves. What they didn't know was that Phantom and I had developed a partnership of authentic communication. As a result, we took fourth place in The English Class.

Happily, today I am able to be with my clients in the same way. I have let go of my need for them to have powerful outcomes. I stay present with them and learn their language. Also, I am aware of when they become

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frozen and tune out. I have let go of judgment. My only goal is to find ways to support my client. As with Phantom, I am in awe as I witness their greatness.

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(minor revisions made on 12/17/03)

Dessie Leff, MBA ,Executive Coach lives on a small ranch in Argyle, Texas with her husband, three dogs, two cats and two horses. Her passion for horses is often combined with her passion for coaching. This article and her new live hands-on seminar "Horsemanship and Leadership" spotlights one of the parallels she has discovered. You can reach her at coachdessie@earthlink.net.



THE INSTITUTE FOR
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Tomorrow's Life Coach™

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