

The Arabian Horse: A Prodigy in Equine Facilitated Human Development

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Horses are experts at facilitating human development and the abilities of the Arabian horse are exceptional in this area of expertise. This is my conclusion after ten years of experience. But first, let me tell you about my work as an expert in Equine Facilitated Human Development and then give samples of our Arabian horse-personalities and their special qualities.

Throughout the ages, horses have been invaluable collaborators with humans and trail-blazers for mankind. Today horses have become vital allies for anyone seeking personal growth. As Winston Churchill once emphasized: *“there’s something*

about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man”. However, it’s more than that—much more! Horses offer us consistent and compassionate feedback, and throw a light on the limiting effects of our thoughts and actions, thus allowing us to develop a new perspective on our life.

The well-known life coach Martha Beck reminds us: “an authentic connection, as faint as it may be, cannot be made without starting to heal our emotional wounds”. This is the essence of our approach: working with horses in a specific way on the ground, thus giving our clients the opportunity to change their limiting beliefs, muster up the courage to seize new

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opportunities and help them heal trauma - the origin of which is often lost to conscious memory.

But why work with the horse in a program to facilitate personal development?

Horses have many qualities which make them unique teachers for increasing an individual's self-empowerment and encouraging personal growth.

Horse Size

Four of these qualities are particularly pertinent to our work: **their size**, their social behavior, their sensitivity and their magic ability to make the invisible visible! First of all, their size: horses are imposing; they are fascinating and elicit our respect. They are symbols of freedom, independent beings, emancipated. Interacting with a horse requires accessing inner resources, which are sometimes unknown, however usually dormant. Horses are domesticated and conditioned, but they maintain a strong independence compared to most dogs for instance, since they live in a barn or in the fields and spend many hours away from their human handlers. This means that the effects of our actions, or lack thereof, will immediately become visible in their responses.

Social Behavior

The **social behavior** of horses is akin to that of humans: they have companions, a changing social ranking system and live in large herds of familial clans. They are nomads and conserve energy to escape from possible predators; their comfort-zone is clearly defined. Any activity which might impinge on the boundaries of this comfort-zone will elicit a reaction. The same goes for us, but we don't usually realize it. Horses represent giant screens for psychological projections, which means they are amplifiers for our behaviors and emotions: any behavior we observe in the horse accurately reflects our (often unconscious) attitudes. Our projections

thus become apparent and therefore changeable.

Sensitivity

The **sensitivity** of horses is a prerequisite for their survival and makes them very attentive to the slightest changes taking place around them. The idea that horses can read our thoughts is an anthropomorphic viewpoint. In reality, the horse "reads" energetic reactions in our bodies resulting from our thoughts. The effect of our emotional state can be demonstrated: A person with negative emotions (fear, anger, etc.) or incongruent behavior has a heightened pulse and will elicit the same in a horse nearby. In this context the horse is like a lie detector (try it out next time you are near a horse, but please make sure he can get away!). On the other hand, a horse will remain calm and seek connection with someone, if this person's actions and thoughts are congruent. Through this we rediscover our true motivations and desires rather than merely responding to the needs and demands of the people around us.

Horse Magic

And finally, the seemingly "**magic**" powers of horses. In seeking to find congruency, a horse will connect directly with our authenticity; and since, as we already learned, an authentic connection is not possible without beginning to heal our emotional wounds, the horse is able to take us directly to that genuine space within.

This deep connection frequently touches upon emotional wounds inflicted in infancy, way before a child develops language and is often difficult to access through other - verbal - forms of therapy. These interactions, which allow a corrective emotional experience, are often difficult to put into words. They are very effective and seem to become engraved in some way on the cellular level. That is what we call "**a horse's magic**".

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Putting this in anthropomorphic terms: a horse has no “personal interest” in “judging” or “manipulating”, he is always present and in the moment. Therefore, his reaction is appropriate, accurate and authentic. Working with a horse offers us an extraordinary opportunity to reevaluate our convictions and adjust our behavior on many levels. Imagine this: You are in a desert in the full midday sun, despite the light everything seems flat. Taking the horse’s perspective is something like changing the sun’s angle, as if it were late afternoon: contours emerge and all of a sudden you can see the depth of what is there.

The horse is therefore much more than a mirror. With the help of a horse you can discover who you truly are and take appropriate action. Arabian horses are particularly skilled in connecting with others.

All horses are sensitive and have all the above-mentioned skills and qualities. In my experience, however, Arabian horses are exceedingly sensitive and thus pre-destined for this work.

It is therefore not surprising that Ara Markash (Amal x Royal’s Kadila), our 31-year-old chestnut gelding and “Horse-Elder”– a purebred Arabian, enralls everyone who meets him! Many of my clients call him “their best friend” because he is frequently the first horse that helps them open up the gates to self-knowledge and authenticity.

Markash is a marvelous being. He welcomes everyone upon arrival, going up to meet them at the parking lot and then escorting them to the practitioner. Markash connects very quickly and knows immediately if he is welcome or not. A particular instance comes to mind. Unfortunately, it was in very sad circumstances. Our lead Paint mare died while giving birth. During the memorial gathering, Amélie, a long-time client, was unable to contain her tears and decided to retreat and give way to her feelings. So





Markash, who was right there in the midst of us, as usual, followed Amélie to her place of refuge and stayed with her until she regained her composure; then the two of them returned to the gathering. He thus provided the solace and comfort she had needed.

And then there is Zaki, (The Verdict/Thee Desperado x Haya/Imperial Imdal), a beautiful grey Arabian gelding, whom we lovingly call “our engineer”. He is a bottle-fed orphan, extremely curious, and open to all encounters and all discoveries. We call him engineer, because he loves running around the quad bike or sticking his muzzle close to the heating in the riding arena. An adorable horse, with an acute sensitivity to everything around him.

We frequently use Zaki when we select an exercise to promote the discovery of new tools and problem-solving skills in the client. But mostly clients are touched by feeling their hearts and their love in his presence. It is not uncommon that a lot of emotions well up when they are with him. He patiently acknowledges the pain and the joy through licking, chewing and yawning. A clear signal that emotional reprogramming is in progress and healing can occur.

How it works:

Our interactions frequently begin as follows: Together with the client, we discuss a current problem or an area of least satisfaction in his/her life. This may range from wanting a better connection with his/her horse, to not feeling understood in a relationship up to having difficulties being assertive with his/her co-worker (the possibilities are endless). This discovery is followed by a “body scan”.

Through mindful listening to what is happening inside his or her body and feeling any sensations present – zones, which might be sore, heavy, hot, energized, pleasant or unpleasant, the client attempts to gather information without censoring or trying to change it.

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The body scan is useful before interacting with the horses in order to have an energetic, emotional and sensational baseline as a starting point to refer to later.

Once the issue of the session is identified and the baseline discovered, the moment to interact and connect with the horses has come. The practitioner therefore suggests an appropriate exercise usually on the ground, which requires no previous experience with horses. After the interaction, there is a closing conversation where the visionpure practitioner helps the client to formulate how the experience may help him/her address the previously addressed issue more effectively in daily life.

The setting, the methods and the interactions with the horses are conducive to overcoming difficulties, healing emotional wounds, learning to become assertive at work or at home, evaluating options, developing leadership skills, achieving a turning point, weaving a surprising relationship with a horse or just simply (re)discovering the joy in the connection with horses on the ground or on horseback; it helps to gain confidence in oneself and others, which unleashes the maximum potential of all concerned.

About visionpure®

visionpure® was established by Eva Reifler in 2008. She gained an advanced Eponaquest approved instructor's certificate from Linda Kohanov (author of *The Tao of Equus* and founder of Eponaquest®) and a Martha Beck Life Coach diploma. She also has extensive training and experience as an analyst and pursuit strategist in the corporate world, working globally.

visionpure® is a pioneering center for horse assisted personal and professional development, 45 minutes from Paris in France. Eva combines Eponaquest, Martha Beck and business skills. This unique combination allows her to quickly and precisely





identify the client's issues, thus making the sessions particularly effective.

She uses these skills to facilitate private sessions, group workshops and train-the-trainer programs (visionpure® practitioner). She also provides customized programs for businesses and CEO's, which can focus on many aspects of leadership and management, including leadership assessment and training for successful businesswomen in the corporate world. Where appropriate, she cooperates with other professionals to provide the best possible expertise.

Eva is dedicated to providing a high level of safety, quality, respect and experience. She speaks English, German and French fluently and works with horses and people throughout the world.

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