

## Horses - Patterns in the Snow

I was out riding a young horse through the deep snow the other morning trying to get the horse to move a little more willingly. As I was re-bounding from side to side in order to balance the horse I noticed the irregular patterns I was making in the snow. The patterns at the start of the ride looked as if I was riding a jack rabbit, when I was coming home the horse was nicely balanced on my leg and body signals. We achieved an easy rhythmic walk. I thought about how the horse and I were part of each other. Those patterns were created by causing a change in the horse. We achieved something special and it was derived from feeling the horse through to gain a response. Feeling of the use feel is being able to use both of our senses and responses in order to communicate. It seems the ability and opportunity to do things with feel is fast becoming obsolete in our society. Most people feel their steering wheels and computer keyboard. Pushing this and that button for control which is happening more than developing their own sensitivity to others. Time seems to rob all of us of personal interaction.

The horse is one animal species still not totally corrupted by us. Many horses still have a free spirit and this adds to the fascination of them. Any horse is corruptible but its captivity allows it to survive. Although many horses do survive very few are truly natural and allowed to thrive. In this respect, the horse presents itself as one of nature's creatures that we can still learn from. Being with a horse can offer us a link to our inherent feelings and the ability to increase our perception by touch. A horse can re-train and de-program our way of thinking by regaining our feelings. We can then apply these feelings in a positive way in our lives while displacing negative feelings as well. To my fellow man - the proverbial guy- this is a topic not to have a beer over! Men especially have to realize that the horse is affected by the way we feel which represents our attitude. A horse is always concerned about our feelings. The horse knows that the way we feel reflects how we are going to act. A horse can learn to trust the person by positive actions. If our feelings are legitimate the horse does not have to preserve itself and expend wasteful energy by wondering what we want. If a person is merely emotional a horse would ignore this until true feeling surfaces. This way a horse can absorb our energy and the changes we cause, hopefully in a balanced and harmonious way.

To any rider the initial feeling of a trustworthy and very well natured horse is extraordinary. The feeling of connecting with a horse is difficult to describe. I wouldn't bore anyone with the attempt. When a rider has a good long ride it seems the horse is in sync with all the elements and time does stand still for awhile. This fresh feeling is not made by any virtual, digital, or mechanical means it is directly real. Horses are not the only animal that can draw out a rider's feelings. However, the size of the horse and the power bestowed in it makes the experience more intense.

A horse often keeps a person in touch with it all and even provides much needed therapy - a kind of debriefing from the everyday pace. In Europe, horses are used successfully to heal disabled people. I have read about elderly people who cannot walk on their own any more, opt for therapy including the horse and they walk again. Remember all those farm kids that rode to school and back everyday, rain, snow or shine. I'm sure this kept them in touch with themselves. Using horses for therapy is becoming more accepted in America. An excellent book called *Horse Sense and the Human Heart* by Adele von Rust McCormick exposes this new type of therapy. The authors are psychotherapists and left conventional ways of treating severely mentally ill patients for an alternative equine therapy center. They still follow the ethics and principles of modern medicine but the therapist is really the horse. They work with all different cases from stressed out executives, psychopaths, psychotic people, youth gang members to name a few. What they have realized is that alongside horses this type of therapy can unquestionably heal the human spirit. Horses give people back a link to instinctual feeling. Once people can re-connect and cope with their feelings they are on the road to recovery.

This fascinating book is a humanistic account of a horse's nature and how they use its superior senses to guide people back onto a sustaining life path. They also illustrate how a horse's "sixth sense" is referred to as "morphic resonance" which they claim all animals possess. This morphic resonance is a fancy name for mental telepathy. Horses read energy by utilizing impeccably honed senses derived over millions of years. The authors' demonstrate many examples of how a horse reacts to things seemingly before they occur. It's ironic that from a scientific perspective these doctors have studied horse's nature and have learned from true horseman how to manage their horses, but they astutely come to similar conclusions about horses as an old horseman would. You learn as much about horses as you do about human nature in their book.

We need to perceive more of our world by touch; using sensation instead of reliance on intellect. The use of feel is so vividly learned from the horse. This is very apparent in children using feel and touch to derive understanding and trust. A child and a horse are a potent combination whereby both flourish and nurture each other. The horse is a fruition of nature all into one creature. The horse is one of the only animals that can cause a person to realize their limitations. Some people avoid this realization. To the equestrian person, the horse reflects who they are because everything a person does is a cause an effect relationship between each other. This offers a person the feeling of true communication if derived properly.

Most riders are independent people who like to be master of their own lives, but search for some other meaning in their lives; away from the human realm A good example of people regaining feeling and learning about themselves is when people are re-introduced to horses on an pack trip. I have experienced this many times when hosting these outdoor riding

excursions. A group of over-achieving professionals head out for the mountains and begin to change. Alongside a horse, its potent disposition causes them to become mellow, relaxed and quiet. Most of the riders stop frittering about details and stop talking about the past. Jokes are replaced for truly funny mishaps and spontaneous events along the way; what is happening becomes more important than the past. They don't know at the time, but they are starting to gain the values of the horse. The rhythm of nature and the horse's constant walk offers patterns and meanings that the person begins to focus on. They start to live for the moment as the horse does. As soon as the path leads back and the strength of the modern world inevitably again takes hold. Often the new found sensitivity is left behind as they drive off. But it can be continued...

Perhaps the point is that the more patterns in the snow we can make the more we are able to learn about the horse's nature which teaches us of our own. Even when a horse is used as a metaphor like the four horsemen of the Apocalypse a heightened sense of meaning is realized. The horse adds to our lives. Horses touch people indirectly to some extent. Horses reaffirm that touch and feel, as a way to learning, is good because it is instinctual. The horse does keep us close to it all.

**Kent Williamson**