

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

By Sherry March 09

The buzz word about dealing with horses these days seems to be leadership. But what is authentic leadership? I will start with what authentic leadership is **NOT**!

I am learning that authentic leadership with either horses or humans is **NOT** as much about communication as we may think. It is **NOT** about taking personality or horsenality assessments. Authentic leadership is **NOT** about focusing on what you think someone else needs. Or giving them what you think they need.

We often think leadership is all about management and control. But that is **NOT** true authentic leadership either. A heavy focus on management and control is about being the boss. Leadership is **NOT** about telling others what to do and controlling the outcomes.

The real key in leading others is to understand the difference between managing and controlling versus leadership and leading with people or horses. Authentic leadership is about finding what is important to others, what they need and creating environments where they can reach their own potential. Authentic Leadership starts with being able to lead yourself first! You cannot lead anyone until you can first lead yourself!

You cannot lead yourself until you are really committed to the **truth**. The truth about yourself and the fundamental core values you have will affect how you lead anyone be it horse or human. You must know what your core values are and be able to define them before you can become an effective leader. You must have a clear idea about who you are what you want to become, and where you want to go before you can lead. Otherwise it is the blind leading the blind.

You cannot lead others until you are willing and able to truly **listen** to them. Listening to those you are leading is a top priority for an authentic leader. I mean really listening by focusing on every word that comes out of their mouth. Also by watching every move or expression of the horse because that is how he is communicating to you. Everything one does or says means something to them even if it isn't clear to you. When you really learn to listen you won't have to tell people or horses what to do or what they need. You will ask them what they need and what you can do to help them?

An authentic leader takes a position of **service**, rather than what can I do to get the ones I'm am leading to do what I want. Authentic leaders have an attitude that helping others be able to lead themselves is of utmost importance. Then when those you are leading can lead themselves they in return become of service to you.

In order to do this you choose to **understand** what truly motivates the people or horse you are working with to try harder. You choose to commit more to what is important to them than what is important to you. You choose to create things that they never believed possible to become reality.

Choosing to truly **listen and understand** those you are leading while serving them will create authentic leadership. When one leads with authentic leadership the product is more authentic leaders not a bunch of blind robots who follow without question, or worse yet a forced performance which causes stress and tension.

You can be what ever you choose to be. This is **self-leadership**. Believing you can create who you are going to be tomorrow is the first step on Self-Leadership. If you want to be an authentic leader for your horse or anyone else you must master Self-Leadership first.

We have created an on-line survey to ask you what you need so we can help you with it. Please [Click Here](#) to fill out our survey. It will help us serve you better so thank you ahead of time for

participating.

Happy Trails,
Sherry Jarvis

"Horsemen share knowledge. Showmen hide it in a corner and go home." -- AQHA Judge Dale Livingston

BALANCE IS THE KEY

By Sherry April 09

After going to the NE Horse Expo in March it occurred to me once again that the key to good horsemanship or learning anything new is balance. I don't mean the kind of balance where one stays upright without falling down, rather I refer to a mental and emotional steadiness which brings harmony.

A horseman who stays balanced has a stability produced by equality between two sides. When we learn not to lean too far to either side of the road and go at a reasonable speed we will have fewer crashes along the way. An aesthetically pleasing integration of common sense elements will keep you traveling in an upward spiral of success. When a balanced approach is taken your **journey will be safer and you'll have a lot more fun.**

Whenever many horse people gather together you will find a variety of different experiences, perspectives, styles, techniques, and purposes being professed and applied. Even though we may all be involved in the same endeavor (HORSEMANSHIP) diversity does abound. But if one looks close enough you can find some common threads of similarity underneath the differences. It takes a discerning eye to recognize both the differences and at the same time the similarities. If you can learn to do this you will be able to stay balanced and **your horse will thank you for it.**

Part of the balance needed to succeed with horses is having a means of judging and deciding what is right for you and your horse. Every horseman will at some time have to cope with several often conflicting ideas, factors, or situations at the same time. To horse owners this can often be confusing and frustrating. Thus to learn what it takes to become really good with horses and develop a system that works for you and your horse it requires a **balance of openness, skepticism and common sense!**

Everyone of us hopes to find that holy grail of horse training which will solve every problem we have with our horses. We hope to find a perfect working system which fits every horse and every owner. The problem with every system is **horses are masters at pointing out the weakness in any system.** So it takes a balanced person who is able to work within a system yet think outside the box in order to resolve our weaknesses and allow the system to accomplish our intention.

I believe that if you are with horses it is because consciously or not, you desire to be challenged and to learn. However you will never learn anything new or gain deeper understanding if you go in with the attitude that a certain "way or training system" is wrong or not for you. I used to compete in rodeos and my beginnings with horses could be considered pointing in an opposite direction from where I am now. I have lived and breathed on opposite sides of two very different systems, but for me they were both pointing at the same thing... **the horse!**

As I reflect on the people, horse and systems which have influenced my brand or style of horsemanship I see they share similarities as well as differences. I choose to focus on the common threads between those two systems which I have experienced, as the **truth usually lies somewhere in the middle.**

The horse doesn't care what we call ourselves....natural, dressage, barrel racer, roper, cutter,

trail rider, competitor, western, English, professional or amateur, **the horse just wants us to understand him mentally, emotionally and physically.** I believe I now have a better understanding of people and horses because of my diverse experiences and willingness to live somewhere in balance between openness, skepticism and common sense. Plus I have put myself under a proven training system and at the same time I allow myself to think outside the box when needed. I have also given myself permission to experiment and learn from my mistakes.

We can all learn and benefit for each other because at least in the basic form any performance or discipline you choose does not need to be different from “natural horsemanship”. No matter what activity you do with a horse a solid foundation is needed where you can carry freestyle riding into the finesse it takes to compete at higher levels. We will all be better off, especially the horse, if we begin to **focus on the commonalities between our systems and celebrate our strengths rather than our weaknesses.**

Happy Trails,
Sherry Jarvis

PS: A balanced horseman has the ability to stay poised no matter what situation is thrown at him.