

Self-Led Horsemanship™

Building Relational Consciousness - One Part at a time



Self-Led Horsemanship

Building Relational Consciousness through:

Upholding the **values** of constant consent, engaged connection, respect, patience, collaboration, kindness, curiosity, and the compassionate treatment of equines engaging in life with us.

A **commitment** to treat each horse as an individual with preferences, opinions, and the ability to say no to unviable requests.

An **ethical dedication** to listening to horses with our eyes, a gut felt sense, our hearts, and our Self-Energy, without projection or transference.

A **promise** to take responsibility for ourselves and to continue to heal on our own journey of contemplative Self-Discovery.



Self-Led Horsemanship as “Lifemanship”

The Natural Lifemanship Institute – Connection is ALWAYS the Goal

NL Relationship Principles

- Equines are sentient beings
- The relationship with the horse is a real relationship
- Healing cannot happen at the expense of another
- If it’s not good for both, eventually it’s not good for either
- The absence of no is not a yes
- Safety comes from a connected relationship; not from arbitrary safety rules
- Connection with Self is necessary in order to request connection from others
- Who we are in session is more important that what we do
- The horse doesn’t know who the client is

NL Principles of Pressure in Making Requests

- Connection through attachment and detachment
- Have clarity in your request
- Understand your “why”
- Ask yourself, “Is it a viable request for our relationship at this time?”
- Start with the least amount of pressure
 - Increase when ignored
 - Remain when resisted
 - Release when connected
- The issues of control
- Neurobiology and attachment

Information adapted from NL. Please visit: <https://naturallifemanship.com/>

Intention Not Agenda

Connection versus Task
Experience versus Work

- Parts focus on agenda and are task oriented, looking to achieve a specific outcome (can be inflexible and rigid)
- Intention for engaged connection comes from Self-Presence and increases intersubjectivity
- Shared experiences with “contingent communication” builds relational consciousness
- Repairing ruptures strengthens trust and security within the relationship

How do you *feel towards* the horse?



Healthy relationships cannot be developed through control, dominance, force, or superiority

The “A’s” of Self-Led Horsemanship

Informs the ethical considerations of horses and humans interacting in a courageous space with the intention of co-creating a healing experience of secure attachment that is mutually beneficial for both.

- Attention
- Awareness
- Attunement
- Acknowledgement
- Affirming
- Appreciation
- Authenticity
- Attachment
- Accommodation
- Articulation
- Accountability
- Alliance





**Engaged Connection
starts before the
session begins and
continues after the
session ends**

Relational Consciousness is:

The heightened awareness of connectedness and subconscious processes

A component of engaged connection indicating Self-Presence and attunement to another.

It is the simultaneous awareness of Self and parts and the Self and parts of another.

Intersubjectivity flows from this state.



Building Relational Consciousness...

- Begins with knowing yourself and leading with Self-Presence.
- Builds upon awareness, attunement, resonance with the equine.
- Is a learning opportunity to deepen your awareness of the other.
- Becomes stronger with intentional repair of relational ruptures.
- Indicates responsibility for your choices and the impact on the horse.
- Creates a co-occurring corrective experience of engaged connection.
- Respects the process of growing together.
- Is the reciprocity of trust.
- Requires commitment to the principle “good for both”.

What makes a good “therapy horse”?

*Be a student of the horse:
Self-Energy and Parts of Horses*



Horse's Self and Parts

Dysregulated & Disconnected - Parts

- Hyper-aroused (fight or flight responses)
- Wide eyes and nostrils
- Tense muscles, head high, swishing tail
- Ears pinned
- Hypo-aroused (freeze response)
- Shut down, dissociated, “sleeping”
- Inappropriately making requests
- Trying to control the relationship or be controlled in the relationship

Regulated & Engaged – Self-Presence

- Responds with cooperation to requests
- Appears calm and relaxed
- Facial muscles and tail relaxed
- Eyes and ears track you
- Head may be lowered
- Willingness to engage appropriately and positively



Parts-Led versus Self-Led



Language Matters

Projection of negative qualities obscures what the horse is communicating

- Horse's attachment strategies are shaped by past experiences and used to get needs met.
- The more regulated the horse the more Self-Presence they have. The more dysregulated the horse the more "parts" they have.
- Behaviors can be viewed from a "protector" mindset. Be curious about what the horse might fear and what the positive intention might be.
- This is possible only with Self-Led Horsemanship and working with your own parts.

How do you feel towards the horse?



Lazy Gelding



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No manners



Moody Mare



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IMAGE ID: 1107751
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Disrespectful



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IMAGE ID: 79288612
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Parts Projecting

Dangerous



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IMAGE ID: 1628069539
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Naughty



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IMAGE ID: 1940828227
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Communicating Burn-out



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IMAGE ID: 7669
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Needs boundaries



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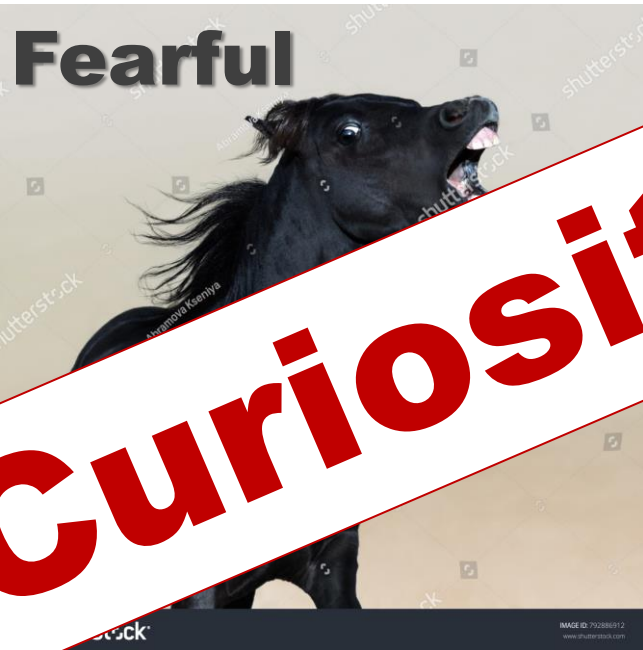
Communicating Limits



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Fearful



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Exploration

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Trying to Control



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Curiosity with Context

Miniature Horses... Why?

Dedicated to Tim Jobe



Short legs, golden hearts, rounded bellies and
frequentside eyes

The miniature horse is often cast aside

Their usefulness lies not in their ability to carry a
rider or win dollar ribbons or prizes to flaunt

But rather in captivating the hearts of those
whose fears creep up and haunt

Like echoes in cold corridors and
dark attics of the mind

The past so deliberately and
desperately left behind

The miniature horse can be fierce in their own
right - to smooth away the wrinkles of worry and
fear and replace it with the purity of connection
and joyous tears

The miniature horse has quite the affection - if
only we use unbiased eyes of connection...
Free from perfection and filled with appreciation

For those short legs and rounded bellies and
side eyes are gifts to help us find our Selves within,
and for that they have my lifelong dedication.

Considerations for Adding Equine Engagement

- Why now?
- Are all of the client's parts on-board?
- Are the client's goals something that the horse could support?



Adding Equine Engagement Assists the Client with:

- Connection with Self and others.
- Identifying needs and wants.
- Attunement to needs and wants of others.
- Social and emotional awareness.
- Awareness of impact.
- Corrective relational experiences.
- Fulfillment in relationships.
- Ability to make requests in relationships.
- Manage conflict.
- Work with internal activation and external triggers.
- Being a student of themselves (& horse).





Self-Led Horsemanship™ Models Respect and Reciprocity in Relationships. Rupture and Repair are part of this process. Perfection is an illusion. Context Informs Contingent Communication.