

## Tap into the Power of Love

By Vicki Jayne Yates BA Hons



I wrote an article – The Power of Love that was published in Horsemanship Magazine. You can download this article and many more for FREE on my website.

I write this resources to delve into the topic a bit more. With the aim is to inspire you, help you to try out ideas with your horse, to prompt discussion, debate and enhance your interactions with your horse. Real, unconditional love is one tool that helps us to open up the magical connection we seek with our horse. Humans and horses thrive when they live experiencing love, peace and harmony. It is the greatest gift we can share.

# THE POWER OF LOVE

**Vicki Jayne Maris is very clear that horses respond to and experience love and that this emotion is key in healing both equine and human alike**

When a horse is not emotionally balanced, problems or unwanted behaviours are the end result. Caring about how your horse feels, his emotions and what he thinks about your relationship is a huge part of good horsemanship. Many horses are deeply loved and well cared for in human terms. They have the best of everything they physically require but the horse may not need, want or enjoy some of this human pampering. I see horses who have been checked out by experts and deemed free of physical discomfort, but the horse still has issues. The owner is often at a loss when I talk about equine emotional needs and emotional balance. You cannot convince me that horses don't have emotions.

Being able to read emotion in horses is equine empathy and using compassion in our interactions with the equine is true horsemanship.

Watch the herd and you will see horses communicate with a wide range of emotions, including love. They form bonds and express love to one another. Love between horses can be

witnessed in many situations. Notice how a pair bond can be perfectly happy, peaceful and content standing side by side doing nothing. Horses grieve the loss of a loved one and express love in joyful play. Shared love brings peace of mind, harmony and awakens the soul. In the herd, love brings balance, stability, harmony, and order. Look closely and you will see love and a huge range of other emotions expressed in the herd.

Empathy, compassion and unconditional love for our own kind is often in short supply. As a result many of us struggle emotionally, living half-lives with partners in damaged relationships. Some people experience working in a toxic environment of pressure, intimidation and bullying. I have experienced both. During those difficult times, finding inner peace and harmony was extremely challenging. Inner peace and balanced energy are what enable a magical connection with your horse. I truly believe horses are gifts sent to teach us life lessons. Listen to your horse at these challenging times. Your horse will often know and tell



**Vicki and her horse Merlot**

you what changes you need to make.

As I work with troubled horses, the owner's story often surfaces and we discover that the horse is reflecting the very things their human partner needs to work on for their own self-development. Using love and the language of the herd breaks down the emotional barriers and it is wonderful to hear how an owner has taken what their horse has taught them into other parts of their lives for the better.

The language of the herd is about open honest dialogue, empathy and understanding. Along with the foundation of love, this enables you to be caring, kind, receptive and compassionate. We all need to feel free to express ourselves without fear and to feel safe in a relationship.

Mutual understanding requires good observation and listening skills. Learn to listen, to understand and clearly communicate; this will help you to be heard.

Place emotional wellbeing, love, enjoyment and happiness at the heart of your horsemanship and the magical connection you seek will open up before you. With emotionally damaged horses this will take considerable time and industrial quantities of patience. No quick fix or force will ever achieve this. Horses teach us so much. It is a golden opportunity to take these lessons into all walks of life.

**Vicki Jayne Maris**  
Inspirational Horsemanship tutor  
[inspirationalhorsemanship.co.uk](http://inspirationalhorsemanship.co.uk)

## Natural Love

Watch horses and their interactions in the herd and you will see a wide range of emotions, love is just one. Horses are able to express love and are very affectionate. They develop deep, loving, meaningful relationships with one another.

I have witnessed horses form lifelong bonds. Watch and observe horses sharing physical contact in a loving way such as mutual grooming, scratching or softly nuzzling each other, leaning gently into each other, standing nose to tail snoozing swishing flies from one another, sometimes they hang their heads over each other and gently hug etc....

Then there are the more gentle and intimate expressions of love sharing breath with each other. The soft gentle whiffle of nostrils or the low, soft 'nickering' sounds. Then watch the patience of a horse waiting for their loved one to return.



**You can't convince me horses aren't emotional. When I look into the eyes of a horse I see its spirit, soul a friend looking back at me.**

As a Reiki healer and equine communicator I see things from the language of the herd and from a healing perspective.

The horsemanship relationship is very important to the human and horse. Sometimes it's about helping the human to understand equine communication, herd rituals and etiquette. So they are better able to understand and communicate effectively and appropriately with their horse.

Other times the horse may have had a troubled past, suffered trauma, abuse, etc.... Inner struggles the human is facing will surface in horsemanship as horses will reflect this right back at us.

Horses and humans can suffer from unnecessary emotional troubles and stress in life. The key to success is to first identify the root cause. The next step is finding the right help. In my experience a holistic approach is what is needed as problems are often complex.

The blend of Reiki and horsemanship is a fantastic tool for clearing the unbalance and conflicts in relationships. It is an art of balancing minds, bodies, spirits and souls.

When we experience within us and our horse healthy, vibrant balanced energy and good relationship based on the language of the herd you will experience that close magical connection.



## Merlot and Me

Not all wounds are obvious, horses experience emotional trauma, distress, pain and a very wide range of feelings. I reflect back to the very first day I met my once in a lifetime horse Merlot. I witnessed his previous owner abuse him, whipping him. He was in a terrible place, I couldn't leave him there.

I saw his spirit, soul and his troubled mind. I felt the fear, the anxiety and the emotional pain.

His inner love had been beaten into hiding. It was easy for him to get angry, sad, depressed and frightened. He was stuck in a terrible unchangeable past memory. He was a victim of his mind focusing on this tragic past.

Looking back is no good unless it is a good view. My job was to lead him to a peaceful place to help him clear his mind and with my love restore his vision to see a better life. It was about showing him what he was capable of doing, building on achievements, self-worth and dignity.

A positive outlook and a negative mind set determine if you view yourself as a hero or a victim. I experienced a very powerful connection instantly with Merlot. I felt and understood his emotional pain. This was the pull, the reason I had to have this horse. Helping Merlot have a positive outlook on life moved him from feeling a victim and helped him blossom into a hero. He was my hero. I often reflect on what this plain little bay horse taught me. Many of his life lessons I use to help others.

I often think back to years ago to that day in May 1990 when I went to view Merlot and ponder who chose who. Was it fate or destiny? I think it was mine and Merlot's destiny to meet. If you look up the meaning of destiny it is a predetermined course of events or fixed order of the universe. Now in reflection I truly believe horses are gifts sent to teach us life lessons. For sure I felt this little bay horse reach out to me and grab hold of my heart, I know Merlot chose me that day. He attached an etheric cord.

True friendship, yes Merlot and I developed a true friendship. It took time and industrial quantities of patience. True friendship can be defined in many different ways. It can mean something different to each and every one of us. This is my definition of friendship: Friends come into your life, be they have two legs or four for a reason. In your lifetime you will find only a handful that will stay and travel with you. True friendship requires loyalty, truth and complete understanding. It involves honest open communication. The right communicating can make all the difference. This is hard enough to get right when it is our own species and language. When we look at inter-species friendships you have to learn a new language.





That first day we met he reached out and touched my heart. Little did I know that day the impact he would have on my life or how his influence and wisdom will stay with me until I die. He had the ability to change me and he did.

He is etched in my memories forever. Not a day passes when I don't feel his influence, guidance and wisdom because he is in my heart not just in my mind.

Developing our friendship I had to demonstrate beyond doubt to Merlot I was someone who cares for him, not just physically but emotionally and spiritually too. I had to step up, mean it, be dependable, reliable, consistent, and stick about through the really bad times.

He had to trust that I would not hurt him. In the early days the friendship was very much one sided. As we learnt about each other and we negotiated the boundaries in our relationship our friendship started to grow and a bond developed.

I had to show Merlot life was good, fun, enjoyable and I was committed to him. Showing him life could be better was about walking in when others had walked out.

I had to be honest, open and loyal. It was no good waiting for Merlot to be friendly I had to show him how.

Nurturing a relationship takes time and effort. You have to be there in the good times and the bad. Being there through tough times showed Merlot I could be a true friend.

Be kind, listen but at the same time be fun and light hearted. I had to be ready to guide and to be guided. Be open to growth together. Our friendship inspired each of us; we learnt from each other and in turn achieved things we would have never thought possible.

Love between two souls, yes I believe Merlot and I developed our friendship to one of similar commitment and we shared a similar destiny. It started out with Merlot needing me to help him and the tables turned around when Merlot rescued me in my darkest hours. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here to share my insights with you. Merlot helped me recover from a serious illness.

## The Three Legged Stool

On my travels I see many horses and people struggling. Everyone at some point in their life will experience some personal battle or struggle.

I like to think of life's balance is like sitting on a three legged stool. When all three legs are strong and well attached the stool is solid, stable and supportive it provides you a great place to sit.

However if one of the three legs is weak, damaged or rickety sitting on the stool is a balancing act, which over time can deplete your energy.

When two or more legs are damaged you have no stool to sit on and you are heading for a serious situation.

This got me thinking as to what are the three legs on the horsemanship stool? I decided they are: 1) Intent and calm balanced energy. 2) Physical and mental health. 3) Behavioural / emotional drivers: assertive, passive, aggressive or manipulative.

Merlot's three legged stool was in a terrible state each leg was very insecure and wobbly.

His intent was to keep humans as far away as possible. When with humans he was in a high energy state as relaxation was not something he had experienced due to his mental wellbeing shattered by the previous abuse.

Physically when I purchased Merlot he had very sharp teeth that needed attention, a few small sarcoids and a sore back caused by imbalanced hooves and a poor way of moving.

Mentally he was suffering from fear, stress, anxiety, a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. His nature was to be a passive horse however his past had taught him to use aggressive behaviour to protect himself. He had learnt attack was the best form of defence. He was a classic fear aggressive horse.

There was no balanced three legged stool for my poor boy to rest on.

My job was to help him to be healthy physically and mentally. I had to guide him to engage with me. He needed to know he could communicate and I would listen and be compassionate and kind.



## This was easier said than done, it was complex.

Some aspects that in an ideal world would have been best to deal with I had to leave for a later date. For example having his sarcoids treated conventionally can be unpleasant and painful which would fuel his mistrust of humans. Therefore I decided to have the vet check them so they were in the picture but to and treat them using alternative therapy. I am glad that I did this as time went by and Merlot became more balanced the sarcoids became smaller and eventually disappeared.

Having his teeth rasped was something he found very upsetting, but at least it was done as quickly as possible with a touch of sedative.



His hooves took many visits from the farrier to balance, as one front hoof was very low on the heel compared to the other plus he had poor horn quality. Luckily he was never worried about the farrier.

His physical range of movement was poor. He had moved so badly in the past he had physically developed the wrong muscles and switching on a new way of moving and developing different muscles took considerable time. This could only be done slowly, tactfully and carefully.

To help him mentally I had to help him overcome his stress, fear and anxiety. Relaxation was going to be essential, I had to teach him to relax as it is impossible to be stressed, anxious or fearful if in a relaxed state of mind as they are polar opposites.

With relaxation in mind and the five foundation stones: bond, trust, respect, time and focus and enjoyment I set about helping Merlot to become more mentally balanced. Once he became more mentally balanced he felt less need to exhibit unwanted aggressive behaviours.

Working on why he felt the need to be aggressive and emotional, I had to listen carefully to his view point and help him through each of his unwanted behaviours by using positive reinforcement and equine communication. Making interactions, fun and rewarding.

**Consider this, your horse has to have a balanced secure three legged stool, this is only half the picture it is essential we have a sturdy balanced stool too.**



Many people that I meet are excellent horse people, clearly skilled, yet struggling with their horse. Some find it hard to switch off from their lives packed with fast paced stimuli, heavy responsibilities, never ending to do list, etc....they feel the strong urge to always be doing.

You see in their horsemanship they are unaware of the impact their busy energy has on their horse. Others it is the high levels of anxiety and stress from non-equine matters affecting their state of mind and energy, in turn it becomes highly damaging to their equine relationship.

There are many blocks people unwittingly bring to their horsemanship. Many have lost touch with simply being, slowing down, doing nothing, relaxing, being calm and finding inner peace.

Many people are not even aware of how intent and energy shape their lives, their interactions and their communication with others with equines or humans. Energy imbalances can in extreme cause physical and or mental health problems.

Eastern and holistic therapies work on balancing energy. There are many different therapies, with different approaches that collectively work using energy, to modify, or manipulate to effect healing. Eastern medicine recognizes energy flow, or Qi (also chi or ch'i) flow. Qi is active in any living thing. Life energy is said to be the fabric of the universe. It is life energy, life-force, or energy flow. I think of qi in the term of energy, for me it also has links to spirituality and a range of alternative medicines that balance energy and as I am also a Reiki practitioner I have the skills to influence this.

Energy flows around and through the body and we have ability to tap into this powerful life-force. Horses have evolved to tap into reading intent and energy and they are very tuned into this powerful life-force.

Humans have lost touch with intent and energy and many people are unaware of their own energy or that of their horse.

Many struggle to understand the concept of energy as we are raised in a western culture. For example many of us do not follow these principles with our own wellbeing and follow western medicine that focus on treating the illness / symptoms not the whole person. We have a duty of care to ourselves to be as healthy as we can be in body, mind, spirit and soul.



Learning to apply intent and develop a calm balanced energy is essential when working with horses. Many people I meet need help to get in touch with their energy. They have no concept of what this is so the best way I have found is to let them feel it. They are amazed when I demonstrate sending different intent and energies to them via a length of rope how powerful it feels. It is a revelation for them to feel it and understand how infectious and powerful it is to a horse.

You can learn how to read, apply, absorb and project energy. This along with using core breathing techniques enables you to prefix a request to your horse that then requires no physical touch to be felt by the horse.



People and horses can actively practice relaxation to get in touch with their mind and balanced energy. Relaxation can enable higher achievement, better communication, open minds and fuel creativity. It enables faster, clearer learning plus easier problem solving. It takes the drama out of situations. Relaxation leads to better understanding, control of emotions, and a balanced state of mind and energy. Please check out my FREE download on Relaxation. In this I cover how to use techniques that you can then teach your horse.

Horses are much more fine-tuned to intent and energy and will feel it instantly. Horses have evolved to read, understand, communicate and react to intent and energy within the herd and from other species including predators. The intent and energy prefixes eye contact, body language and physical touch.

Horses can struggle with energy imbalance due to environmental factors, previous negative experiences, prior inappropriate training methods, anxiety, stress etc... The key to helping them is to tap into using intent and energy to communicate more effectively and in turn help the horse develop a calm balanced energy.

A human energy that is calm and balanced alongside equine compassion and equine communication gives your horse a partner who provides stability, safety, security and a relationship built on mutual trust.

Horses thrive with positive reinforcement training. Along with practice that uses intention, energy, focus, direction, patience and correct timing. Therefore an essential skill to develop when working with horses is the ability to read, project and absorb intent and energy.

## Holding Back on Love

One such lesson was with a client who was struggling with one of her horses Bailey. He isn't the easiest horse. I pick up that his previous owner jumped him a lot and used force and equipment such as harsh bits, restrictive nosebands and martingales for control. His old established resistance patterns and a complex personality have meant going right back to basics. It was interesting to observe how emotionally detached Bailey was.

When troubled he would go inwards and then panic. This included blind bolting out on hacks. Forgetting about his human and not looking to her for comfort, guidance and safety.

They needed to work as much on the relationship as a better way of moving. Bailey had an established fixed physical brace when ridden.

I wanted to encourage an emotional connection between the two. I introduced positive reinforcement (clicker training) so Bailey could be rewarded generously for each try.

I noticed how his owner held back from expressing emotion towards her horse. Just a treat to reward the try without showing love and appreciation will only go so far.

I was curious so I asked her how she felt. She said she felt he didn't want or appreciate love and affection like her other horse.

It was clear meeting both horses that yes they were like calk and cheese. Bailey didn't actively seek love and affection like her other horse. Yet when it was offered clearly he loved it.

I encouraged her to offer love with no expectation of it being returned.

Bailey learnt to check in with his owner, check for guidance and found that she offered safety and love.

As the bond grew the Pelham bit, flash noseband and martingale tack that had been used to "control" him was removed; replaced with a loving relationship, great open two-way communication.

I hear you ask what about the tack? He was switched to a simple mild bit, no noseband or martingale. He became receptive and soft.

The gestures of love that I mentioned in the opening paragraph starting showing up and appearing in their interactions. Once this emotional channel had opened both became much softer and receptive not just emotionally but physically.



## Love Enables a Magical Connection

When a horse is not emotionally balanced, problems or unwanted behaviour are the end result. Caring about how your horse feels, its emotions and what it thinks about your relationship is a huge part of shaping up horsemanship.

Many horses are deeply loved and well cared for within human terms. The best of everything physically required. Sadly the horse may not need, want or enjoy some of this human pampering.

I get called out to horses checked out by all manner of experts, deemed free of physical discomfort, made to measure tack purchased etc...but the horse still has issues. The owner is often at a loss when I talk about equine emotional needs, and emotional balance.

**You cannot convince me that horses don't have emotions.**

Being able to read emotion in horses is equine empathy. Being appropriate is to use compassion in our interactions with the equine.

Horsemanship to me is dialogue with equine empathy and compassion. Watch the herd and you will see horses communicate with a wide range of emotions.

**For example love.** They form bonds and express love to one another. Love between horses can be witnessed in many situations. Notice how a pair bond can be perfectly happy standing side by side doing nothing, peaceful and content. Horses grieve the loss of a loved one. Love can be seen in joyful play. Shared love brings peace of mind, harmony and awakens the soul. In the herd love brings balance, stability, harmony, and order. Look closely and you will see love in the herd in so many ways along with a huge range of other emotions.



## **Empathy, compassion and unconditional love for our own kind are often in short supply.**

Many of us as a result struggle emotionally. Living half-lives with partners in damaged relationships. Some of us sadly experience working in a toxic environment of pressure, intimidation and at worst bullying. I experienced both. During those times finding inner peace and harmony was extremely challenging.

Inner peace and balanced energy are what enable a magical connection with your horse. I truly believe horses are gifts sent to teach us life lessons. Listen to your horse at these times. Your horse will know and tell you what changes you need to make.

Often as I work with troubled horses the owner's story surfaces. The horse is reflecting right back at their human partner the very things they too need to work on for self-development.

Using love and equine communication helps to break down these emotional barriers for their relationship. It goes beyond, I get feedback how they have taken what their horse has taught them into other parts of their lives.

True horsemanship is about open honest dialogue, empathy and understanding. Along with the foundation of love enables you to be caring, kind, receptive and compassionate. Two legs or four we all need to feel free in a relationship to express oneself without fear and to feel safe.

Mutual understanding requires good observation and listening skills. Learn to listen to understand and to clearly communicate to be heard.

Place emotional wellbeing, love, enjoyment and happiness at the heart of your horsemanship and the magical connection you seek will open up before you. With emotionally damaged horses this will take considerable time and industrial quantities of patience. No quick fix or force will ever achieve this. Horses teach us so much. It is a golden opportunity to take these lessons and apply them in all walks of life.



## What to Do and What Not to Do

Humans are drawn to the horse's soft velvet nose and their liquid eyes. Humans love to touch a horse on its face, to pet it. Let us first consider this in terms of the language of the herd. Is this touch invited by the horse? In many instances the answer is - No; often a horse will try to move their head away when we try to touch them.

Horses have a language around personal space, just as humans do. We only feel comfortable with certain people we know with established trusting relationships entering our personal space and touching us. We observe social rituals around touch and personal space. The herd has a language and etiquette around personal space too. Often horses want to check us out they use their noses to do this. It isn't a request to pet their nose.

Firstly it is important to use the language of the herd around personal space, horses like you to be clear on this. We don't have a right to enter any horse's personal space or touch it. We must seek permission.

There is a language that is subtle and gentle.

Be aware if you are asking your horse to stay out your space or if your inviting them in. Observe herd etiquette and manners. Without using the language of the herd you will be unconsciously blocking your horse from giving you love. This creates a one sided relationship. Once you understand and can apply this in your horsemanship so you are the calm assertive partner your horse is looking for you can then take things to the next level.

This next level is a magical still place. I have helped clients to experience this soft magical connection. You need to practice this when the environment is free from outside influences. Pick a time and place that both you and your horse can relax and will not be disturbed.

Using equine communication softly interact with your horse using relaxation as your goal. When ready invite your horse into your space to share affection knowing herd rituals will be observed. Lower your energy, soften your body. This is the signal to your horse it is ok to approach. This softness is about acknowledgement, acceptance and empathy.

Wait to receive the horse's affection. Be still and centred in your energy. Your mind must be peaceful. Your body relaxed, soft, keeping your hands and arms still. Let your horse nuzzle you. The horse will want to gently bring their head to you. Open up to empathy to your horse. They live empathetic lives and look for that in their companions.



Breathe softly, slowly, be relaxed, be still and quiet with your mind and body. You can touch your horse. Only do it when invited by the horse. This touch must have the offer of unconditional love in the intent. The horse will understand you are offering affection.

For those who I have taught intent and energy to prefix body language then touch I can take this experience to the next level. I show them how to connect via the heart chakra. Placing their hand over the heart chakra of their horse while in this relaxed state and opening up to giving and receiving energy exchange. They will feel a magical connection as their energies merge. Emotions can be felt so intensely between the horse and human.

My work is about encouraging people to understand the horse, its world, its reality, its view point. How to use equine communication with balanced energy. Open up to honest open dialogue with the horse. Horsemanship is not monologue.

We should request not demand. We should offer our horse a place of safety within a partnership that is loving and fair. Some horses have some journey to travel when they have experienced past abuse, negative or harsh training, or controlling and fear based approaches. Industrial qualities of patience are required to rehabilitate these horses.

The foundation stones to horsemanship are mutual trust, respect, bond, enjoyment plus time and focus. This will lead to more shared affection and love.

Love should be embedded in to all our interactions with our horses. When you're loved and cherished you are treated well and you know how it feels. Our horses know this too. It will surface in all our interactions the trick is to tune in to how you feel. Love and appreciation go a long way in any relationship.



**© 2023 Vicki Jayne Yates BA Hons.** Qualified Reiki Clinician, Equine Communicator & Published Horsemanship Practitioner. [www.VickiJayneYates.co.uk](http://www.VickiJayneYates.co.uk)

Vicki Jayne Yates holds the intellectual property rights to the text and images. This resource was developed to support her clients. It is designed to be used alongside professional support of your own choice. Permission must be obtained from Vicki Jayne Yates for using any part or all of this resource in any format: printed or digital.