

TELEGRAPHING IN

Do you know what your horse is thinking? Vicki Jayne Maris asks

This article is inspired by my friend Norma. Her beautiful little horse, Tsar, is very expressive and Norma has learned to read his intent, emotions and energy. She says he telegraphs in to her and I find myself using this phrase often as I couldn't have put it any better myself. This telegraphing in has shaped Norma's conversations with Tsar and she is learning what is appropriate to telegraph back. It was a revelation to her that Tsar could read her intent, emotions and energy way before any physical aid was applied and as a result. Her physical aids got softer, lighter and, given practice, were not needed at all.

For many people their first experiences with horses are mechanical, learning the basics of position, balance, the aids, to ride using monologue, telling and directing the horse. However, it's also vital to learn about listening, understanding with compassion and empathy, and being appropriate so we can recognise equine feelings and opinions. Horses provide us with very useful feedback. Positive feedback lets us know we're on the right track.

Negative feedback gives us the golden opportunity to change our approach and develop our horsemanship. The horse makes up 50% of the dialogue and, if we seek a true partnership, the horse's opinion is the only one that matters. The magical connection people seek with their horse is about using open, honest dialogue to reach a mutually agreed partnership that strives for harmony and refinement in activities that both horse and rider find fun, enjoyable and rewarding.

I teach people intent first, flavoured with emotion, then energy, followed by body language and, if required, a soft physical aid. Intent is what we plan to do and how we feel. Horses pick up on our feelings and emotions very quickly. They find human extremes of emotion

difficult and can reflect your inner issues right back at you. If we are focusing on helping a troubled horse, or positive progressive training, and building a partnership with our horse it is our responsibility to turn up balanced emotionally, spiritually and mentally. I do not mean being false or wearing a mask, because you can't fool your horse, he will notice any sign of incongruence in you and it will rattle him. I am saying deal with the root cause of your own issues. That is your true responsibility to yourself and your horse. When we are centred we can see what our horse is struggling with and read and understand his communication. Once a horse knows you will listen and take on board his feelings and opinions you're more likely to be able to help

him. Everyone likes to be valued, listened to, heard and understood. Horses have emotional needs and seek spiritual harmony and mental safety. During the early days of owning my horse Merlot, he taught me about being emotionally balanced in order to help him. His troubled abusive past at the hands of his previous owner left him with huge issues and considerable emotional baggage. To offload this he needed to be listened to, understood, offered empathy and allowed to work through them, supported in a safe partnership.

Telegraphing in with each other is so important. What if we embedded it into all aspects of life?

Vicki Jayne Maris

Inspirational Horsemanship tutor
inspirationalhorsemanship.co.uk

