

## Maverick

Here is the unedited article that appeared in Horsemanship Magazine



I smile, thinking back to years ago when a good friend watching me with my horses said I was a maverick. Yes I will wear that badge with honour. If you look up what is a “maverick” it does describe me. The definition: It was originally used by ranchers in reference to an unbranded cow, or a cow that never ran with the herd. The term was derived from a U.S. cattleman Samuel Maverick. A maverick is someone who doesn’t conform to established standards, play by the rules or follow the crowd. This person has independent or unorthodox views. They aren’t scared to cross the line of conformity. But their unorthodox approach gets results.

Being a maverick isn’t easy. In the equine world corporate branding is big business. I visit a lot of yards on my travels and equine branding is alive and well. People wearing branded clothing to indicate who they follow and their horses kitted out in branded kit too. I am an unbranded maverick that doesn’t run with a branded herd. So it is tricky for some people to get an understanding of what I am about. Often I am asked: Do you do Parelli? I understand why this is asked, as when people think of natural horsemanship they are drawn to the high profile brands. Those who have widened their thinking beyond the main branded horsemanship practitioners and are actively seeking a different approach arrive to me with a stack of interesting questions. A true maverick I am, I don’t follow a brand, or have my own herd of trained branded understudies.

I don’t conform to established standards or fit into an established definition of horsemanship. My own underpinning guiding principles, my own style of horsemanship and life experiences shape my independent approach. By not following the crowd or affiliating to a strong established brand makes beating your own path hard. We all follow different roads seeking fulfilment. It doesn’t mean that one is right and another wrong. Or that one approach is better than another. It isn’t easy to live your own truth, often people need to pigeonhole ideas and feel comfortable with conformity. Being a maverick is about trusting your inner instincts which guides you along your journey. It is about being strong, brave, and having faith in your own approach. A maverick stands alone. Some of my views are unorthodox. Yes I have crossed the line of conformity. My clients and their horses are living testimony to my approach getting results.

Being a maverick makes you a prime target for ridicule. You learn fast as a maverick to quietly do your own thing. I never offer advice, an opinion or help unless it is asked for. I respect that we all follow different roads and I have no ambition to change the world. I am happy to share my road with those who wish to travel with me. I write this article because some of you reading it may be seen by others as a maverick and therefore feel ridicule from those who do not understand where you are coming from. We all have our own personal equine dream, aspirations and reasons for horse ownership. What keeps me going on a professional level is seeing the people and horses I help blossom. What motivates me on a personal level with my own horsemanship with Ruby is the deep meaningful relationship I have with her, the bond, the fun



and enjoyment we share. I am lucky to be surrounded by like-minded people where I keep Ruby. This is a luxury. In the past I kept horses on very well-run livery yards and found tolerance, understanding and respect in short supply from a minority and indifference from others. There are livery yards emerging that offer natural horsemanship, sometimes under a brand which if you are a maverick you may struggle to affiliate with. I became aware that many of my clients quietly work with their horse practicing natural horsemanship often in isolation even on big busy yards or on small private fields. Some are lucky with one or two other like-minded souls to share their experiences. With this in mind I set up the Natural Horsemanship Warwickshire Group, which has grown in numbers. I felt it important that people could meet up, share their experiences, learn from each other and have FUN.



So to all you mavericks out there I encourage you to live your truth and let your inner self shine. Do what feels right not what is easy. Follow your passion and have the courage to chase your dreams and goals but live in the real world. The only way to achieve your personal goals is not to worry about what others are doing. Your horse's opinion is the only one that matters. Don't change to fit in; be yourself; your journey will lead you to find yourself in the company of like-minded people. Don't let the fear of striking out on your maverick journey hold you back.