

LET THE HORSE LEAD THE WAY

NEWSLETTER of the SOUTH AFRICAN
EQUINE FACILITATED INTERVENTION ASSOCIATION
(SAEFIA)



JULY 2023



We know that the horse's heart emits a large electromagnetic field, and in general, this field is coherent. When we immerse ourselves in the field of Horse, our own field can become entrained by the horse's heart field, and we are as a result led into a higher heart rate coherence ourselves. Humans experience this in many different ways. One common experience is a calmer and more open-heart centre within one's own body.

With an activated heart centre, we sense our connection to the beings and world around us, and perhaps even begin to consciously tap into a feeling of love for this wholeness that is life. To my mind, this is an experience that perhaps one can call unconditional love. It certainly does not have anything to do with the kind of romance that society often regards to be love. It sits deeper in our very being and moves us more subtly yet much more powerfully. We have within our bodies, our wonderful human instrument, the physical heart as well as our energetic heart. To the degree that this energetic heart is activated, we emit frequencies of love from our own bodies into the world, thereby creating a field around us which invites others into this frequency of love.

Since we approach our divinity through our heart and not our head, Horse is capable of leading us ever back to our heart centre, continuously requiring of us (and teaching us as they may) to express heart virtues in the lived experience of our bodies in daily life. Our horses support us in the quest to sever ourselves from the baser instincts and emotions and offer us a path to harmonise our emotional energies, thereby letting the intelligent and intuitive voice of our energetic heart speak to us and guide us in our lives.

The energetic heart is a portal to our innermost self and soul. Our primary intelligence is empowered through our emotional mastery, and our ability to conduct our life from the platform of heart virtues like appreciation, compassion and forgiveness, to name some. The frequencies inherent in these virtues unite us with the realm of our intuition, which is our coherent connection to the universal field of information – referred to by physicists as the quantum vacuum or field. The expression of our soul through our energetic and physical heart is what I understand as divine love manifest in and through us humans on this planet. The horse is a master teacher on this path.

~ By Natalie Stobäus

WHY LET THE HORSE LEAD THE WAY?

Our SAEFIA newsletter for July explores what it means to allow the horse to lead and what happens when we do.

We explore the power of the horse-human relationship, including:

- * - Heart entrainment
- Horse as teacher in unconditional love
- Horse wisdom
- Equality for horses..and humans
- Women's empowerment
- Horse as teacher in interaction

Does letting the horse lead mean that we become passive in our relationship with the equine? When we are offering an equine-facilitated intervention for a client, do we entirely "let go of the reins"? My sense is not. As with everything, balance is key. Horses bring their presence, their sensitivity to our energy, their non-judging, their common serenity. We as co-facilitators may act as conduit and communicator of their language and their accurate reflecting of where the client is at. It is our role to enable the client to see, to listen, process and integrate. It is our role to hold the space and to keep it safe for all.

In this newsletter you will find, serendipitously, that its contents meld wondrously and seamlessly.

"I love it when a plan comes together"

(Quiz question: which TV actor said this? Umm... may give away our relative ages;-)

Thank you as always to our SAEFIA members for their wonderfully rich, inspiring and sometimes positively challenging content.

Ed. Kirsten Neke

"Half the failures in life arise from pulling in one's horse as he is leaping"

Julius and Augustus Hare,
19th Century.

Horse Wisdom

from my Book-Shelf ~ By Liesl Van Zyl

I offered to do a book review and as usual I have ended up starting 3 books, re-reading large sections, signing up for a weekly class by one of the authors, instead of finishing the promised 1!

What I therefore have to offer is a preliminary review of the start of 3 brilliant books!

The Horse Leads the Way - Honoring the True Role of the Horse in Equine Facilitated Practice

by Angela Dunning

Having read a quarter of the book's 221 pages, I can say it offers a very comprehensive and very insightful understanding of Equine Facilitated Practice and in keeping with her affiliation as an Eponaquest Worldwide (Linda Kohanov) graduate, there is a strong tenet toward empathy for the position of the equine and reliance on the insight, wisdom and point of view offered by the equine co-facilitator. She writes with beautiful empathy and offers practical tools and protocols for ethical, equine-centered practice.

Equus Lost? - How we misunderstand the Nature of the Horse-Human Relationship – plus Brave New Ideas for the Future

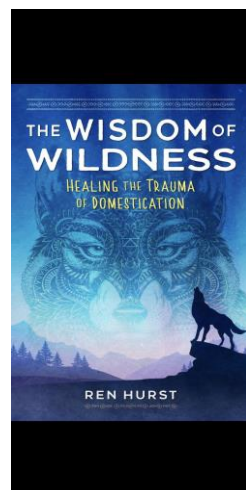
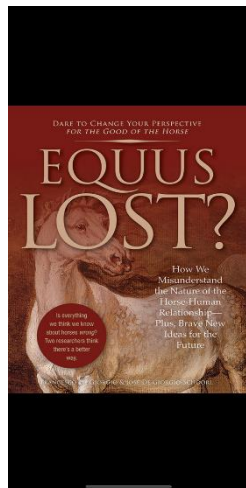
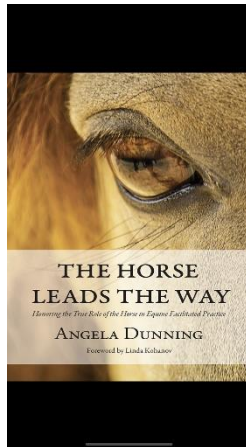
by F De Giorgio & J De Giorgio-Schoorl

In this book a magnificent view of the world that deeply resonates with me is the Zooanthropological approach (as opposed to the Anthropocentric approach in which the human is at the top of the animal pyramid). It offers the reader a compelling call to truly re-examine our understanding of equines as other to what we have traditionally been taught. It invites the reader to adopt a new code respecting the horse as having an autonomous mind and being an individual with his or her own culture and lived experience. This opposes much of the growing popular perspective of an equine learning model. What do we truly know? Is what we know based on what we have observed in equines who have true autonomy to choose (space, mates, nutrition, community) or what we have been taught to expect based on a very narrow domestic perspective that uses the horse and places the human at the top of the food chain? How do we move into a humbler perspective of being part of something so much bigger than ourselves? The authors offer us profound insights and a beautiful perspective by sharing their observations of how horses live.

The Wisdom of Wildness

by Ren Hurst

This is an incredibly challenging and personally transformative book! It calls into question the very paradigm of domestication. Through power. Through control. Through systems of reward and punishment. Ren asks us to consider that as deeply domesticated animals we have a tremendous responsibility for the care of the non-human animals in our lives. We owe it to them and to ourselves to be honest about what it is to be a captive within an unequal power dynamic. Healing first ourselves to emotional maturity and then coming from a place of being fully in our bodies (experiencing in an embodied manner our full range of emotions and pain without interference or disruption).



Women empowered by horses

~ By Isabel Wolf-Gillespie

Women have fought to achieve equal rights in many parts of Africa. In some countries, women are still not equal by law. The first lawful votes for women in the UK were only held in 1918. Equality requires a focus on education, as well as community upliftment and awareness campaigning. The care for family members can take up a lot of a woman's time. Household chores can be a huge burden, limiting a woman's ability to take on paid employment. When women do undertake paid work, they often experience a wage gap between their earnings and those of men. With jobs mostly entailing the same work, this gap can only be attributed to gender discrimination. When women are equipped with learning and share decisions about families and livelihoods, the productivity and health of a society rises.

The value of Equine Facilitated Interventions within a rural African context, working mostly with girls and women is enormous, especially the observation and reflection of a naturally living horse herd. In rural Africa, equines frequently form a part of life, with the community relying on them to assist in day-to-day life. Traditionally it's the men who are tasked with the livestock duties. The women and girls have very little interaction with the equines they live with and rely on to exist. This causes a disconnect, a non-engaging and distance between women/girls and equines. A facilitated interactive experience reflecting the equine as a relatable, sentient being is nothing short of an eye opener.

A complete, natural herd of horses consists of varying numbers of mares, stallions and youngsters of different ages living together harmoniously. An aspect that often results in complete surprise and disbelief is the fact that a horse family herd is led by a lead mare and not as expected, the forceful, strong male. It is her that is responsible for the herds overall wellbeing, health and safety taking on the role and responsibility of the mother, not only of her own offspring, but she is also the "mother" of the entire herd. It is almost as if suddenly the power and value of the feminine is recognized, acknowledged, appreciated, and seen with newly found respect. This realisation inspires conversations surrounding emotions of inequality, suppression and fear, discrimination and a low sense of self-worth. A lead mare establishes her place by pushing just enough but not too much, at the right time, consistently and with love and respect for those that she asks to follow. Lao-Tzu's model of leadership is an unobtrusive, nurturing "less is more" philosophy that forms alliances and not dictatorships and is a philosophy fitting the way of the horse. And as it seems humans too ... The realisation that women are leaders, ignites an inner light to brighten for words.

It is almost fitting that the Equine facilitated field has had to fight for its rights just as the women it serves today had to. Equine facilitated activities and/or therapy worldwide encourages women to believe in themselves and acknowledge the value they and their feminine, plays in society. These women are happy to embrace a new set of challenges brought by such freedom. As each individual woman grows guided by a lead mare and horse family, the positive impact on their children, their family, their community, and society expand exponentially. A new approach ... A new future ... A better world ... through the horses.



What I have Learned from my Therapy Horse

By Nina Schein-Murzl

Around 5 years ago, a long-time dream came true for me by adopting my very first horse. Correctly spoken she is a big pony and her name is Gina - a curious and young dun mare that was still very green at that time. I wanted to find a good purpose for her besides being a nice and happy riding companion for me and my son, so I used my advanced intuition combined with the amazing sense that horses have when special needs kids are around and started offering horse experiences for the child of our friends. Luca is a special boy on the spectrum of autism and has some other conditions too. What I recognized and learned from Gina through those experiences together was profound and she still keeps teaching me when I need conscious reminders about parenting or other relationship issues in my life.

Here are the 3 main lessons that I have learned and integrated into every session since I began this journey:

1. We always start with grooming, and connecting, and kids have to ask the horse first if they are allowed to ride it. The horse responds with its body language and I'm happy to take a "no" for an answer, which has happened before and is fully acceptable.
2. If Gina yawns during the session, I always give her plenty of time to do so and don't rush her. This is a great sign that the energy connection and exchange between the two beings is working and in progress.



3. We always say "Thank you" to the horse after riding or interacting and give the horse a little thank you treat. Working with Gina and special needs kids filled my heart and still does to this day.

Horses

I softly sing to them, moving in and around
Caressing round rumps
Addressing strong shoulders
The quiet, meditative munching
Soothes my soul
I meditate with horse minds
Soft noses sensing the qualities of hay
Long legs firmly set to the earth
I am grounded
I am soothed
Their eyes are dreamy as their backs love the sun
Their eyes are dreamy as their feet love the earth
My eyes are dreamy as I share space and energy
Just touching
Just singing
Just being

~ By Patrick Archambeau

In gentle memory of the horses we were privileged to help and know. True angels here on Earth.

With thanks to Natasha O'Shaughnessy

Isn't this BEAUTIFUL!

*It speaks to our Souls and reflects the peace and tranquility we feel when we are with Equines.
As SAEFIA members, we love sharing this experience with others.*



For more information about SAEFIA:

Secretary: Jane Armstrong janearmstrong345@gmail.com | Chairlady: Isabel Wolf-Gillespie info@inthecompanyofhorses.co.za

Our website: www.saefia.org