



THRIVING

SAEFIA Newsletter Vol 3 No 1 March 2022

Remember the time of year when: “The New Year, appears like a blank sheet of paper, a clean calendar, a new chance on thick white snow, you vow fresh footprints.” (J. Kay)

The theme of this newsletter, the first of 2022, is THRIVING. As an Association we have certainly had a challenging year, and yet upon reflection, it is clear that SAEFIA is indeed thriving, our herd is growing, relationships are deepening and together we are learning and co-creating.

The feature article, titled *Thriving Together*, by Liesl van Zyl, is insightful and provokes readers to contemplate what it is to thrive. Liesl shares insights gained from discussions with her horse Cole.

Additional powerful themes that emerge are resilience, relationship and choice. Dive in and explore amongst more: - the resilience and determination to thrive of the Nooitgedacht breed and how the Basuto Pony which was well on its way to extinction was not only saved but is presently thriving. The incredible story will be presented in serial format with Part 1 looking at the Root Origins of the breed.

Following on from this, The Story of Spirit, whose mother was rescued from a pit latrine demonstrates that even a hopeless situation can turn into an opportunity for thriving in the end.

SAEFIA Chairlady, Isabel Wolf Gillespie, shares the vision chosen by members for the year ahead which includes making sure that every member of SAEFIA has a voice. The Musings of Members gives voice to the unique perspectives on the matter of Thriving. This theme is also reflected in the poem, snippets, art and memes contributed by members.

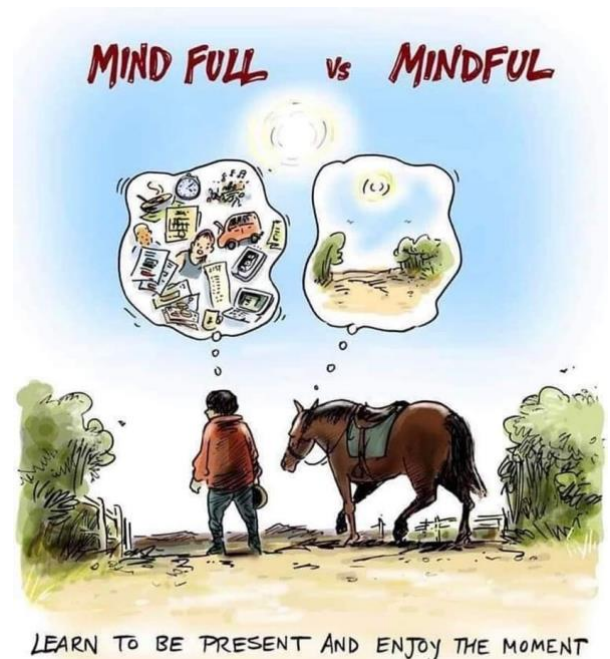
Readers can look forward to feedback and future plans for the Study Group whilst reflecting on the

excellent presentations made during the latter part of the year.

Equine wellness has emerged as a focal point for SAEFIA this year and readers will find a variety of interesting items regarding the subject. A new feature of the newsletter is the Handy Herbs for Horses aimed at equines in Southern Africa and to go along with Handy Horse Care Hints and First Aid tips.

In celebration of abundant thriving, following this newsletter, the Editorial team aims to publish a complementary newsletter since this theme implores a deeper look into key elements required in order to thrive. Member's contributions are rich with this emerging theme, RESILIENCE. Why is it that some, Madiba and Spirit's mother for instance, don't give into the despair they experience, and instead move beyond survival and over obstacles, to thrive?

The Editorial Team wishes all of SAEFIA members a THRIVING 2022.



THRIVING TOGETHER

(by Liesl van Zyl)

Liesl is a founding member of SAEFIA and is a Social Worker in Private Practice with extensive experience in child, adult, family and group counselling, psychotherapy and community development, with a focus on improving the mental health and well-being of clients. She is a certified Irwin Method of Horsemanship Coach and Trainer with an interest in Labyrinths, Energy Medicine, Telepathic Communication and Health Benefits of Meditating with Horses



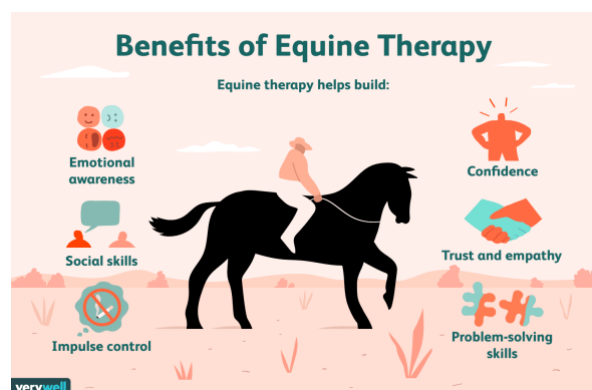
Together, in a system of mutual reliance, respect and support, we become whole and thrive. Thriving is not a static state; it is dynamic, shifting and moving. It is both vibrant and also peaceful and calm. We are a social species, both humans and horses. We are biologically designed for relationship, for interaction, for family, for herd. In isolation we suffer, in healthy relationship we grow and excel.

A definition of thrive is “to grow and develop well or vigorously.” In the Oxford dictionary synonyms for thrive are prosper and flourish. According to this same source “Flourish (of a living organism) is to grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way especially as a result of a particularly congenial environment.” That is an environment which is defined as friendly, pleasant, or agreeable. It isn’t defined as an environment without challenge or obstacles, as

these too promote growth and development. It is an environment in which species needs are met, and effort is made to adjust according to physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual development.

In discussion on this topic with our 22-year-old gelding, Cole, he pointed out that we are intertwined, interconnected, reliant on each other, and contribute to each other’s optimal rhythms of living. Everybody makes adaptations for survival, but thriving is a state of expansion. Now more than ever I believe when we listen closely to them, our horses are directing us toward greater states of thriving. Cole pointed out that the keys to thriving are generic for our respective species, and also individual for each person. Having the freedom to choose becomes vital. It is at times a delicate balancing act, however, the point at which it all converges into the music of the universe to serve the highest good of all concerned, is where there is balance between give and take, receive and share. Each aspect of our lives is purposeful or at the very least functional, each role-player if not revered, is certainly appreciated in contributing to each other’s lives. It is like gut sounds in our horse, too little is not good, too much is also a sign of imbalance.

Thriving with my horses seems to come most naturally when I move with them from the heart, listening deeply to them as a herd and respecting our needs and limitations, slowing down enough to sense my breath and theirs. It happens when I set aside “the way things have always been done” and explore the way things need to be done now. We thrive when the rhythm we follow suits them and me, and my intuition is honed to pick up on the nuances of love in relationship. We thrive when I accept the mistakes I make and learn rather than beat myself up and allow all of us to go back to putting heads down to graze.



TRIBUTE TO A HORSE

The story of *Spirit*

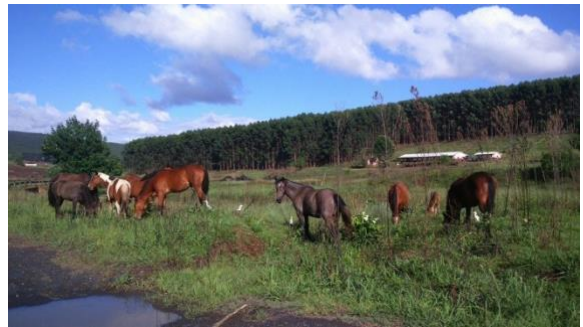
(contributed by Brigid Letty)

In May 2019, a pony was found trapped in a disused pit latrine that had been covered with corrugated iron. People in a nearby house were alerted to the situation by her persistent whinnies. She had been there a couple of days already when efforts were initiated to remove her. After many hours and much debate about how best to get her out without the sides of the pit crumbling, a search and rescue team, with support from Coastal Horse Rescue and a number of other folk managed to get her sedated and lifted out of the hole. She was taken back to Coastal Horse Rescue, where she was cleaned up and given the name Freedom after her terrible ordeal. After a few months at Coast Horse Rescue, it was found that Freedom was actually in-foal and in December 2019 she produced a bay colt that the staff named **Free Spirit**.



Freedom was just one of a number of ponies that live in the plantations around the village of Richmond in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. These pony herds comprise individuals that belong to members of rural communities nearby as well as more feral animals that are very shy of

humans. They are periodically rounded up by the local pound because of the hazard that they pose to traffic since they wander across the roads at will.



In June 2021, I decided to foster a pony from Coastal Horse Rescue to keep my old thoroughbred, Jinnga, company. Arriving at the centre to view another little mare, I was very taken with a young bay pony and decided to foster him, only to find out that this was in fact Spirit, Freedom's foal! He's been with us for 18 months and has grown into a confident and quirky young horse. I'm in no hurry to back him but am doing groundwork with him to establish some boundaries and build a relationship that will provide a sound basis when I do start riding him.

Little did I know when I went to assist with a mare trapped in a pit that I would end up with her foal here with me at home. What a crazy world we live in with all these unexplained coincidences.

SERIAL ARTICLE PART 1 - THE ORIGINS OF THE NOOITGEDACHT HORSE

(Contributed by Korarodo Stud, edited by Kirsten Neke by permission of Karorodo Stud)



During colonial times, 1700s and 1800s, there developed a breed of light riding horse at the southern tip of Africa called the Cape (Riding) Horse or Boerperd. The Cape Horse originated

from the interbreeding of the first horses arriving in the Cape; Javan ponies, Barb (North Africa) and Arabs. "The Cape Horse was small, yet highly esteemed for their usefulness and though lacking many good points externally, they possessed the good qualities of hardiness, endurance, excellent constitution and a temperament that combined great willingness, docility and steadiness."- Bruce Dennill. The Cape Horse had an inherent resistance to the dreaded African Horse Sickness virus and was adapted to the harsh conditions of the African continent. These characteristics together with stamina, bravery and work-ethic, made them superior to the European imports during the Anglo-Boer war.

The Basuto pony originated from the Cape Horse. People of Lesotho acquired these horses as spoils of war and trade with the settlers. As a result of harsh conditions and in-breeding, there was a loss of height and nobility associated with the Cape Horse, and the Basuto pony largely replaced it. An extremely hardy and surefooted pony with great stamina and courage developed through natural selection in this harsh environment with its rocky hills and mountains and very little human intervention regarding horse-husbandry.

From 1850-1899 there were sizable, stable populations of the Cape Horse and Basuto pony in areas outside the Cape Colony. However soon thereafter, both were on the brink of extinction for several reasons; the introduction of unsuitable horses into the genetic pool (e.g., Arabs that were not sure-footed), the introduction of foreign diseases, the Great Blizzard of 1902 and the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902). The Cape Horse was predominantly used in the Anglo-Boer war.

The Settlers were a melting pot of mainly Dutch, German, and French, British, Danish, Portuguese, and Italian descent. They had a horse-centered culture, an eye for breeding horses and depended on horses, donkeys and mules for their livelihoods. Good horses, donkeys and mules were considered a most valuable possession and were very well looked after. However, the life expectancy of horses in this war was just 3 months! This was a terrible time in South African history, but not unique since most breeds were affected to the point of extinction by war or the industrial revolution at some time or another. There were however pockets of Cape Horse/Boerperd that stayed relatively pure despite everything and today we are still fortunate enough

to have the Cape Horse's legacy living through the Nootgedacht, Basuto and South African Boerperd.

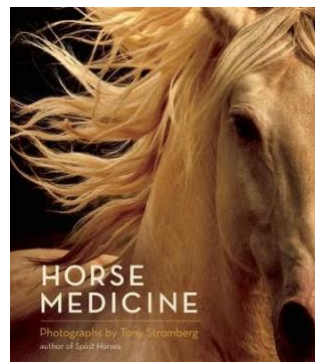
For the full article please follow the link:
karorado@live.co.za

MEDIA AND OTHER RESOURCES

Book Review

(by Kirsten Neke)

Horse Medicine ~ Photographs by Tony



Stromberg, California, 2014

"For Iberians, the horse is a four-legged prayer"

An exceptionally beautiful book of horse photography, the images so evocative that I felt myself up close to the horses, spellbound. The author named the book *Horse Medicine* to honour horses beyond their beauty, for their deeper essence, as teacher, healer, and balancer.

Stromberg identifies four primary gifts horses bring us (begging the reflection, what gifts do we bring to our horses?): 1. The horse reflects intense power and spirit and calls us to reconnect with our own inner power and strength. The horse reflects our longing for freedom and points the way to lifting the restrictions we have placed on our heart; 2. Horses mirror us, reflecting our inner emotional processes. They teach us about our authentic selves, helping us heal from old wounds and patterns that keep us from evolving; 3. In their healing capacity, horses teach us about true connection, not just with them, but with ourselves and the natural world at large; 4. And ultimately, through teaching, healing and connection, they help us transcend the human realm and taste "the divine".

Being with horses can leave us feeling inspired, alive, aligned and rejuvenated. When in the presence of a horse, our minds may stop, at least partially. As a result of this stillness, we are able to see and feel much more deeply.

This is not an inexpensive book, but it is stunning and inspiring and definitely looks good on my bookshelf.

And on an entertaining note: Perestroika in Paris

(contributed by Josephine Laing)

NATIONAL BEST SELLER
From a Pulitzer prize-winning and best-selling author: a captivating, brilliantly imaginative story of three extraordinary animals—and a young boy—whose lives intersect in Paris in this "feel-good escape" (*The New York Times*).



MEMBERS' MUSINGS

Members' Musings is a tribute to the voices of our members. In this edition, members' contributions have an almost musical and symphonic feel. They range from a melodious piece on Thriving through Horse(wo)manship, to the electric charge carried by the word Thriving, to deep friendship with horses from a religious perspective to South Africa's beloved Madiba delighting us with his innate sense of humour.

How horses help humans to thrive: from a Christian perspective

(by Christelle Gevers)

"The wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears". Arabian Proverb.

We need friends, and our best friends will most likely be animals. Where there are people, drama and conflict follow. These things can stand in the way of thriving.

I believe that God gave us the opportunity to have animals as our friends, companions, and pets. Therefore, God made sure we can thrive with our animals and have friendships with them. We all have some complications and problems to deal with in life. We were gifted with the opportunity

to have animals as therapists. They are the best listeners. You can talk to them, even though they don't answer verbally, they are always there to listen to our problems. Sometimes, all we need is someone to talk to who will not judge us. By talking with my horse, I feel better, stronger and able to live a more fulfilling and prosperous life.

Our horses do not mind what we look like. They only see us as their friend. They do not judge us for all the wrong we might have done in our life. Instead, they love us the way we are, just like God loves and cares for us the way we are.

Hidalgo is my "go 2" man when I have any complaints. I tell my horse everything. Just as a religious person desires to have a strong connection with God and persist in a relationship with God, so do we have a relationship with our horses. I believe that God created horses, for me and others to have as a friend, to hug when we cannot feel God. We know He is there, but we can't see Him. Therefore, we have our horses to hug and see in place of God. As God can't be with us, he gave us horses. Horses are so caring, loving and trustworthy. They show us care and love, just as God shows us how much He cares and loves us. Horses are true at heart. I love my horse. I could never compare him to other friends because he is just one of a kind. A gift from God."

Thriving, an Energetically Charged Word *(contributed by Sarah Mitten)*

Thriving. Now there is an energetically charged word. What is "thriving"? It all depends on the observer. Sue has a pot plant in her bedroom on the windowsill. Sue loves her plant especially when it flowers. Anne visits Sue and tells Sue that her plant is lacking nutrients and is not placed in the perfect spot. Sue is upset that she has been keeping her plant in less than happy conditions. The plant is upset that Sue is upset. The plant gives all its energy to flowering just so that Sue can smile and smell the flowers when she opens the curtains in the morning. The plant feels dejected, it wants nothing more than to make Sue happy.

The word Thriving leaves us open to judgement and criticism, particularly self-judgement and self-criticism. One would hope that you are doing the best that you can in any given moment for yourself and those that are in your care. "I want my horses to be in an environment where they can

thrive!” What does this even look like? What is the measurement of Thriving? Is it enough to have your horses properly fed, sufficiently exercised and to be groomed regularly? Perhaps one must look at the emotional, exercise and nutritional needs of each individual horse? Would that be sufficient for them to thrive?

Just as each horse is an individual so are their needs individual and as long as you are doing your very best to meet those needs, your horse will meet you halfway. Just as we are learning, growing and evolving so too are our horses and it doesn't always look pretty. Keep going. Keep trying. Keep aiming for the sky. *The path to Thriving might be bumpy and full of potholes but as long as you are on the path you are doing just fine.*

Madiba

(contributed by Natasha O'Shaughnessy)

A shining example of how to thrive in the darkest of situations has to be South Africa's own Madiba, who was given some Equid inspired Sense as a young boy.



Excerpt from Mandela's autobiography,
A Long walk to Freedom

"I learned my lesson one day from an unruly donkey. We had been taking turns climbing up and down its back and when my chance came, I jumped on and the donkey bolted into a nearby thornbush. It bent its head, trying to unseat me, which it did, but not before the thorns had pricked and scratched my face, embarrassing me in front of my friends. Like the people of the East, Africans have a highly developed sense of dignity, or what the Chinese call "face." I had lost face among my friends. Even though it was a donkey that unseated me, I learned that to humiliate another person is to make him suffer an unnecessarily cruel fate.

Even as a boy, I defeated my opponents without dishonoring them."

WHEN I AM AN OLD HORSEWOMAN

(Contributed by Aronel Beukes)



(Photograph taken of Patty Barnhart for Publication)

*When I am and old horsewoman
I shall wear turquoise and diamonds,
And a straw hat that does not suit me
And I shall spend my social security on
White wine and carrots,
And sit in my alleyway of my barn
And listen to my horses breathe.*

*I will sneak out in the middle of the night
And ride the old bay gelding,
Across the moonstruck meadow
If my old bones will allow
And when people come to call, I will smile and
nod
As I walk past the gardens to the barn
And show instead the flowers growing
inside stalls fresh-lined with straw.*

*I will shovel and sweat and wear hay in my hair
as if it were a jewel
And I will be the embarrassment to all
Who will not yet have found the peace in being
free
to have a horse as a best friend
A friend who waits at midnight hour
With muzzle and nicker and patient eyes
For the kind of woman I will be
When I am old*

(By Patty Barnhart, the Arabian Horse World
Magazine)

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER NEWS

Chairlady's Comments

(Isabel Wolf-Gillespie)

A warm welcome

I would like to express a word of appreciation and gratitude to our outgoing committee, for their commitment and service to each member of our association during very difficult times. Your leadership has pulled us through, and I am honoured to take over the reins together with the newly elected committee.

Horses listening to humans think or feel, can have life-changing impacts. Silently, they are able to acknowledge often subconsciously stored negativity, pain and struggle and provide a valve of release. The restorative effects horses have on our emotional and mental wellbeing, can make us feel alive, hopeful and connected. To thrive means to flourish, to grow, to be successful and do well in life. As humans we feel like we are thriving when a business meeting results in a contract, when a completed project is being rewarded, or when our personal relationships are filled with moments of closeness and love.

We, the SAEFIA committee, hope to lead the association from strength to strength, providing support and learning opportunities to enable our members to thrive, personally and professionally.

"The tests we face in life's journey are not to reveal our weaknesses but to help us discover our inner strengths. We can only know how strong we are when we strive and thrive beyond the challenges we face." — Kemi Sogunle

Meetings

SAEFIA holds monthly meetings made up of alternating Open Meetings (with an experiential presentation) where any visitors are welcomed, and Focus Meetings which address Association growth and development as well as member peer supervision, learning development.

The theme for 2022 is Equine Wellness

Meeting dates and times have undergone a revamp and will be alternating from Saturday mornings 09:00 to 11:00 and Tuesday evenings from 19:00 to 21:00 with the option for members to stay on to

chat or discuss matters after the meeting has officially closed.

Presentations

A number of excellent presentations were given by members and recordings are available from the members themselves or from the Deputy Information Officer Officer, Juanita Biggs.

Study Group

(Coordinator Natalie Strobäus)

Members of SAEFIA take part in many wonderful, challenging, expansive, thought provoking and soulful conversations during informal interactions and SAEFIA meetings. Often topics arise, which some members would like to explore more deeply.

This is the purpose of the study group; to create time and space for further in-depth study and discussion. The next meeting, which will be confirmed for a date in March, will look further into *heart rate coherence and the relevance/use it may have in various EFL settings for both horses and humans*.

Meetings are generally online on the first Monday evening of each month, 19:00-20:30.

For more information contact Natalie Strobäus at natalie@squirrelstale.co.za

EQUINE WELLNESS

Equine First Aid Box - FEI video series

As part of the #HealthForHorses campaign together with the FEI (Fédération Equestre Internationale) and partner Boehringer Ingelheim (global leader in equine health) have developed a three-part series looking at a comprehensive first aid kit for horses. This along with other current and valuable articles, videos and other resources regarding equine health can be found on the FEI website. *The first aid box for horses: FEI Video Series* <http://fei.org>

Equine Headgear - an innovative approach The Micklem Multi Bridle

(With kind permission by William Micklem)

William Micklem is an international coach, best-selling author and renowned speaker based in Ireland. He is a regular presenter at international equestrian conferences.

William Micklem says that the idea all started with his father Dick, who was an expert on horses' teeth. Anatomically, the upper jaw molar teeth are a lot wider than the lower jaw molar teeth which results in tremendous discomfort for a number of horses when fitted with traditional headgear. William wanted to design a bridle which overcame this and other problems. He wanted a bridle which could be used in various bitless combinations, as well as a lunge bridle with a more comfortable fit which would avoid the problems with nose and poll pressure.

William says this about the bridle: "The bottom line is that if a horse is more comfortable, they will be happier and likely to perform better. The daily difference may only be small, but accumulated incremental change makes a big difference in the medium and long term".

What makes the Micklem Bridle different?

The design follows the natural shape of the horse's skull thus alleviating pain and pressure caused by conventional bridle design because the Micklem bridle is designed anatomically from the inside out.



Features of the Micklem Bridle:

- Widened and padded headpiece provides poll comfort

- A standard noseband can also cause discomfort and damage to the delicate and sensitive tissue of the mouth. The angled drop type noseband on the Micklem bridle avoids this entirely.
- Traditional cavesson, drop or flash nosebands can put excessive pressure on the main motor and sensory nerves which exits at the points found right where the traditional cavesson fits. Continual pressure in this area can cause damage as well as numb the nose and lips. The Micklem bridle completely avoids this area.
- The noseband avoids the fragile and delicate bones found at the end of the equine nose.
- The tongue and bit fit in the narrow lower jaw where the bars are shaped like a knife. Understandably some horses object to excessive pressure on the tongue and bars. The bit clips prevent this pressure from being exerted.
- The bitless options include a side pull version and a cross over system which avoids excessive nose and poll pressure.

For the full history of the Micklem Bridle and an excellent website and weekly blogs follow the Website [link](#) and YouTube [link](#).

Contact email: william@enniskerry.net

HANDY HERBS FOR HORSES

(Contributed by Natasha O'Shaughnessy)



Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*, Valerianaceae)

Valerian is a plant found growing on banks and old walls and is native to Europe and Asia. It is distinguished by its opposite, compound leaves and abundant tall pink or white flowers. The root is the medicinal part of this important herb which is commonly called "all-heal". The root contains a volatile oil, Valeric Acid. As the roots are

perennial, roots are lifted only after two years growth, then dried for medicinal use.

The medicinal properties are powerfully nervine (acts therapeutically on the nervous system), sedative (to calm) without being narcotic (an addictive drug used for pain relief and induces sleep). It is also a febrifuge (anti-fever) and mild



vermifuge (anti parasitic). Valerian is one of the supreme remedies for epilepsy.

Internal Uses

Treatment of epilepsy, calming supplement, anxiety, chorea, acute constipation, worms, malaria and eye ailments.

External Uses

The expressed oil is used as a rub for paralysed limbs, cramps (for colic or ovarian discomfort during oestrus), swollen arteries and veins. The root thinly sliced and soaked overnight in cold filtered water is a soothing eye lotion.

Dosage

General equine dose for internal use on an average sized horse is four (4) roots, finely sliced in a litre of cold spring or filtered water. A dose of 250 ml of the strained liquid is given morning and night. Alternatively, the dried powdered root can be used with honey by making a ball. Two dessertspoons

are given morning and night. Adding ginger or cinnamon may disguise the strong smell and make the herb more palatable.

For the treatment of acute epilepsy, the dose may have to be given more frequently, however this should be discussed with a holistic veterinarian. Caution should be used when using herbs together with other drugs, as there could be potentially dangerous drug interactions.

HORSE THRIVING, an organization ..

.. principally and ethically dedicated to horses and herds with the Mission of keeping the working horse thriving.

Principles are required to drive any organisation where working horses are kept as naturally as possible. The horses and humans tend to be healthier. By keeping them as natural as possible the environment becomes safer for everyone. When is the last time that the question was asked at your facility as to why things are done in a certain way when it comes to horse care? Horse Thrive has some excellent tools to help individuals searching for a better way to keep the working horse healthy.

HorseThrive@gmail.com



*My way is the best way for me today,
but if you show me a better way, that
will be my way tomorrow.*

- MONTY ROBERTS

