

A View from the Hoof

The Magic Within

By

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Often mystical are the characteristics and flowing beauty of the horse. For centuries has mankind been infected with the allure, infatuated by the power, and invited by the nature of the horse. Intertwined so effortlessly along the path of life are we. Through many trials, wars and mass migrations, the human spirit so often lifted and propelled by the frequently unnoticed partnership. The horse is indeed the stoic and tireless companion that has been a part of nearly every major human movement, war or event our species has ever undertaken. Longer has the horse been our best friend, than any other creature on earth. In our society today, as in much of history, the truth of the past goes unrecognized, and the story of the horse much forgotten. Ask your average horse owner, horse lover or horse enthusiast how horses got across the ocean on their first trips, or about the migration paths of the breeds into the new world, or if there is an endangered list for breeds of horses, and many will not offer a clue. We see our pretty breeds we have bred, all the wonderful and ever so expensive trappings and accoutrements, the speed on the track, the dance of the dressage, the height of the jump, and we marvel. It is worth marveling at for sure, but pales in comparison to the accomplishments the horse has made in the past. The war horse who helped shape great nations, the big strong athlete that allowed the fields to get plowed, the incredible endurance of the horse who carried forth the torch into the prairie, the cannon across miles of land to forge new worlds and new governments, or to sustain an old government and so many other countless achievements that the human alone, generally takes credit for. Imagine the human race and evolution of societies without the horse. It isn't his beauty in front of the cart, but the spirit each horse has flaming bright inside them, that makes them special. When I go to a battlefield, like the civil war battlefield of Gettysburg, I see the monuments of the great men who fought and died, and I know that alongside many lay or stood a horse. Like so many angels the horse was often seen as a sign of power and safety, a spirited beast standing beside the spirited soul of man as if to guide and assist us along our journey of life. No, it is not the beauty and grace we see and seek today alone that makes the horse so precious, but rather the valor with which he stood by us as we moved along our journey of life. The horse is not a pet, though it seems easier and sweeter to assume so. An animal, who has taken such great care of us so many times, deserves to be treated as a companion to humankind. If you love your horse, or all horses as many of us do, it behooves you to appreciate the history of the equine.

The equine has an ability to draw us in and that streams loosely along a line that could be called a spiritual connection with us. Horses more than most any other animal offer an interactive relationship with all of us without limits or prejudices, and the magic in their large, soft eyes is ever full of expression and curiosity. They often seem as interested in us and the things we are doing, as we are of them; true signs of companionship. Having had the opportunity in my life to socialize horses to work with and tolerate people with various physical and mental challenges, from subtle to extreme, I have witnessed unspoken, enchanting interactions. The fleeting moments of time within the horse's view of the world offered quick but impressive moments between child and animal that can bring tears to your eyes. The senses of both the horse and the human connecting to reach far beyond the physical expressions we are so used to, breaking boundaries we never knew existed to open the way, offering the person a feeling of being understood. The horse in his new human society may not be as much needed for pushing forth human evolution as before, but the cathartic nature of his presence, will never be out of season. An animal that has given so very much to the human race, deserves from us now a respect that too many never know. Inhumane slaughtering, unchecked wild lands picked clean of the Mustang, is this how living monuments to human history, are to be treated? There are horses on the endangered species list and you should be interested in the preservation of the pure breeds that still exist.

For many years we have looked to the horse to help us along with tasks both spectacular and mundane, and very rarely did he fail us. In our world today, it is the horse that is looking to us for help; help surviving in the wild, and to be properly taken care of and understood on the farm. On a personal level, these considerations are what have led me to develop the Thomas Herding Technique and THT International, The Communicated Equine. There is a feeling of deep and almost spiritual connections with an animal that has been a significant part of human life through the ages. Connecting spiritually is paramount to connecting physically, for the spiritual connection is the higher power that transcends and controls all that follows. I see the horse as a true living, breathing monument in the fields of history. Touching the horse is like touching the past, knowing that the many generations before us would have heard the same sounds, recognized the same smells and all of the characteristics the horse brings to bear. For me it is a direct link, a window into the past, a way to touch a small part of the world that was familiar to times gone by. Reminding me of who we are and how we came to be at this moment in time. Like a spiritual leader offering a supportive hand, a view from the hoof that sees only the good in our midst, forgiving and resolute. If we care to give back just a small bit of what we have taken from the world we can reach beyond what we embrace within our own circle. For there is a mystical gaze reaching out from the horse that seems to invite us all to search the mysteries around us in the hope we can find, the magic within.