

# A View from the Hoof

Potential Withholds;

*Mental illness and the equine athlete...*

By;

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## I

Potential Withhold; anything either physically or mentally, that impedes achievement.

It is quite easy to see in your everyday life that there are those who have an achievers mentality and there are those who have a rather defeatist point of view. When we meet someone, or see someone doing an interview, read about someone else, it isn't so hard to look at their life and think, *man how lucky are they?* We tend too often to live our everyday lives quite happily and safely, with vicarious vision and thought. How many among us will ride along a highway, see the scenic beauty along a country road, in the mountains, or wherever, and just look with wonder, yet have little urgency to know what is there first hand? There are those in the world who will visit the grandeur of Yellowstone National Park, for example, be delighted to see the photos and archives at the visitors center and even little area museums, stand among the spectacular surroundings, and never step one foot into the forest. We indeed love the photos of this or that, but we ourselves, though right within it, do not choose to give ourselves firsthand knowledge. It would be like going to the beach for the first time, maybe the only time in your life, but not allowing yourself the *experience* of getting your feet wet, feel the sting of salt in your eyes from a crashing wave, alas, *something bad might happen*, though you did however, see the photo's. You may really want to do something, be all geared up to give yourself the experience, yet when faced with it real-time, and be unable to hit the go button. You have just allowed yourself to stay on cruise control, not losing but not winning, when life is truly about experience and learning, success or failure is simply a matter of interpretation. We as humans in our everyday life withhold from ourselves our true potential; therefore we withhold then, from

others, this wonderful potential we all carry within. It is a mental choice, maybe the *safe* choice, but it is for the man with reason, indeed a choice. These choices affect the way in which you live your life every day, and have great impact on others as well, good or bad. The cynic might smugly remind us all of the things we can't do. If we cannot single handedly change the world for the better, I for one feel that I can make a change for the person behind me by holding the door for them, saying hello or even thank you, and actually mean it. We all can eradicate our own potential withholds because we have a choice, the key is that we need to remind ourselves that we cannot govern the choices we make based solely on the concept of success. If you were in a long jump competition and the athlete in front of you reached a distance you have not yet achieved, the choice to make the effort should not be based on the outcome. From a mental aspect, we very often defeat ourselves long before we are defeated, we become consumed with what we can't do, and thus never know what we can do; the entire world is filled with bad news and anguish, so what's it matter if I hold the door for a stranger? It matters because you have a choice, you can make a difference just by choosing to do so. Potential withholds for the horse, are not a matter of choice, but a matter of survival.

Any understanding of how potential withholds affect your horse must be accompanied by an understanding of the life he or she has lived and is living. The horse is living in what is in essence, a parallel universe. A world existing at once within and without our own universe of reality; we share the same planet, breath the same air, yet we do not see as *real* the daily life of someone living in another country, another state, across town, another species. The first step to understanding anything is awareness of its existence in the first place. You sit on a boat in the ocean, and you look around you, at the water, the bird's maybe, that is your universe in a way, your reality. How aware are you of the millions of living things beneath you, deep in the water, and are they aware of you? If you have had the lovely experience of swimming with a dolphin, you then care more for their welfare and safety, than those who have not because you have touched a small part of their lives and made it a part of yours. The first steps you have to take to understanding your horse, is to make yourself aware of his reality, and this is done in the way in which we reach across to bridge the space between our two worlds. Communication is the foundation upon which all else is built. You communicate with your horse with every motion and many times with every thought that is followed by the slightest movement; even your reactions to stimulus communicate a message to your horse. It must be understood that if you are seeking to *train it out of them*, you are embarking on a long, fruitless road. The world of the horse may to us seem at times quite enigmatic, but for the horse, it is nothing more than life and the desire for survival. The rules of simplicity dictate that we must not overcomplicate what is, by what is thought to be. If your horse is not doing something, or reacting to some stimulus in a way that you think he shouldn't be, you will only layer the problem with more, by assuming from your point of view, the cause. You are the sender of information if you are not the receiver and we far too often are much better at giving orders, than taking them. Unlike us, the horse generally is reacting to his immediate environment in such a way that he or she feels gives him the best chance at survival without stress. The process of adapting can be inherently rife with hidden

blocks that, for one reason or another, inhibit the progress of the horse. These are not potential withholds in the eyes of the horse, but they certainly can do plenty to inhibit your horse from reaching the next level of whatever career he or she is in. Potential withholds are most often minor issues that are reflective of the associative trigger mechanism. An equation of; I do this, this happens, I live, bottom line, is in place for your horse. Through an understanding of how this process takes place within the basic and natural instincts, potential withholds can be revealed and sometimes circumvented. They will never be eradicated completely, as has been discussed in the previous essay about focus, but there are ways to free the horse from the emotional pinions that are present. Doing a proper investigation into the cause means paying attention to the animal yes, but also to the environment. When you are not interacting with or *working* your horse, the environment is. For all the hours you spend with your horse that horse probably spends more time away from you. Finding the source of potential withholds might well mean a true investigation of the environment that horse is experiencing. Being head shy or easily spooked, bolting from the starting gate, rushing onto the field, the track, the arena, are reactions that are based upon something that may well be very different from the immediate *primary* stimulus, in other words your horse may be hesitant or anxious at the starting gate because of something that is far removed from the place where the reaction is seen. Your horse may be head shy, for example, because of something that has happened years before, or in the field yesterday. We must remind ourselves that we cannot treat the issue by the reactions we see, if so we then risk the development of deeper emotional wounds.

## II

The number one cause of all mentally *or emotionally based* potential withholds are the hidden stresses the horse suffers as he or she adapts to the environmental and social changes of life. Directly and indirectly, environmentally and artificially, stress for the herding prey animal is at all times a force to be reckoned with for it is in a way the barometer of incoming influences. These bombardments are for the most part handled with smooth transitions that are undetected by our senses. Which opens the door to our thinking that, if we do not see it, it doesn't exist. Equine Mental Illness, or EMI, occurs when a stimulus that is not naturally accepted by the basic instinct dynamic, is layered into existence by association. The fact the horse is an intelligent, highly adaptable animal, allows for the things that are *learned* along the way, to have great affect over the underlying basic instinct dynamic. However the same principles that allow for what is the Assimilated Imprinting dynamic to work, do not completely override the naturally occurring desire for survival at all costs. Ignoring this truth during any interaction, training or otherwise, is not only foolish, it is dangerous. The equine's general magnanimity toward his human counterpart is at once his savior and antagonist. Being thus so adaptable and compliant is the

precipice from which the horse can fall into aberrations, and it is the understanding of the how, that allows one to understand the why, of the occurrence of mental issues in the place.

The very first thing to remember is that for any living thing that is considered by others as *mentally* or *emotionally* unsound or distressed, do not envision themselves as having a skewed vision of life. Convincing a human of their *perceived* issues and shortcomings via counseling as an aid to get to the root of the problem is a tool to invite them to realize their personal responsibility to come to terms with their said demons. You won't have the same conversation with your horse, but that doesn't mean there is no need for counseling. You will never by force convince your horse that the world he thinks he's living in is not the world he *is* in. I go back to this issue of trying to by force or repetition, *train it out of them*. You may well put dirt over the fire, but it may again flare up in the future, laying in wait, for the right moment, the opportunity, and the right *trigger*, to show its ugly flames. This is a classic description of a mental potential withhold and the severity of its force and impact can vary widely. It may be during a race that your horse seems to always drop off at the end, or perhaps be jittery at the gate, start off slow but during work-outs clipping off impressive times. Maybe during a dressage event, a barrel race, an obstacle course, there are simple things that seem to be holding the horse back, he or she may do a task any number of times but when you most need them to. It is often the very simple, the minor details and the easy tasks that we find will be the most potent of the potential withholds. All too often, they go unnoticed, and the horse is chalked up as one that seems so full of potential, but largely underachieving. A true investigation into the psyche of your horse, and into the environment that is having daily influences on the horses' senses, can often times reveal the potential withhold, and thus offer an avenue away from it. EMI in large part can be described as the horse having a skewed view of his world, (from our point of view), that is caused by the acceptance of misinterpreted information. It can be a very difficult balance emotionally for the race horse, or any serious athlete. The stresses relative to being a top, world class athlete, are an open invitation to EMI, albeit in most cases the only true indicator of their existence at all is inconsistency in their performances. Horses are rarely born with any form of psychosis. Things happen along the way as they very often do with people.

Too often for people potential withholds are learned and accepted as truth, it becomes for us, even with choice, an easy excuse for *the way things are is because that's the way it's always been*. Tell your child he can't do something, because no one else ever did, or it just runs in our family and that's the way he is going to be, is a horrible cop-out and a crime against humanity. Yet the mindset of both the achiever and underachiever alike is set in motion at youth in many instances. So it is with your horse. It is an established fact that as a precocial animal the horse is at birth equipped with nearly all of the mental capacity for learning that it will ever have, both experienced and associated memories are all that are really lacking. Mental, in truth, *emotional* imprinting starts here, long before the body catches up, the groundwork, the foundation for all the horse is going to be or do, is being formed. One of the worst crimes against the horse in their youth is being taken from a structured family unit far too early. How can we not understand this

as fact for the socially dependant horse, when examples abound in our own species of being? We speak often on the stump about family values, keeping the family together, the family unit as the best tool for giving our children the very best start and chance in life. The same is true for the horse. If you can imagine, and some of you have had this experience personally, being taken from your parents very young, and then living with other children and young adults, from various backgrounds, in a home for children, governed by a handful of truly caring people; there may be love and kindness, but yet there is still something missing. This is the life of many horses. The very first things they learn in the wild are their places in the band, how and why and where to fit in. If one has a good family foundation from which to launch his dreams, one is more apt to launch them. The young horse that is socially sound will learn more, faster, become an achiever. Taken from this family oriented social environment, thrust into a youth group and a handler or trainer asking him or her to do this and that, can be the cause of potential withholds both in the here and now, and far down the line, at *crunch time*. The social distortion of the *survival of me* mentality, is one of the founding causes of Herding Holdup. Herding Holdup is an emotionally charged stress aberration that occurs when a horse is in the stable, around other horses in close proximity with no way to physically place themselves into the hierarchy of the perceived band. It affects horses in various ways and in varying degrees, and is often a hidden potential withhold and the cause of other extrapolated manifestations. Does your race horse always seem to finish the race in the same general area or place? Does he or she have the natural physical ability to beat the field, but come in second or third or last? Is this the result of the track itself, the jockey, the trainer, or is it because of extenuating circumstances relating to Herding Holdup? If your horse is by force or circumstance, always seeing his or herself as being at a certain *level* in the band of horses, or in his band of humans and environment, can this horse be expected to surpass other horses they may see as dominant, or higher in the band, than they? If you watch a band of wild horses running from danger, and being forced to funnel into a narrow escape route through boulders and shrubs, you may well see the hierarchy defined as they file into a single line. This happens naturally and is the reason for, and the result of herd shuffling on a daily basis. Horses benefit from mental supplements, and accept them just as readily as when someone gives you a compliment, holds the door, smiles or flirts even. You feel better, you do better. If Herding Holdup is the EMI, the cause of the potential withholds averting your otherwise world class athletes' success, can only be addressed from taking a view from the hoof.

Understanding the influence of stress on the horse requires a look into the area of how the basic instinct, and the acquired instinct, both interpret and use what they *think* they are experiencing. During activity, and especially very high levels of it as in the training of the athlete, or the introduction to new environments, the basic instinct is in control of 90% of what is perceived reality. The basic instinct *is not* in charge of environmental interpretations at times of low activity or anxieties because of two things; it is inherently a reactionary device and it is peculiarly a channeling service. Basic instinct has one goal, survival, and to get away from danger first, ask questions later, is a primary function. As hypersensitive as the horse is, he loses much of this sensitivity and nearly all of the ability to interpret a high influx of information and

or to decipher stimulus during intense activities. In this high state of performance, increased levels of training, daily work-outs, higher demands, the basic instinct is given the chance to make decisions based on pure reaction. Over time, it becomes evident that the horse seems jittery, and after years of this, when asked to suddenly evolve into a calmer career, the horse may well have serious adjustment issues. It has been operating at high levels with sustained environmental influences for so long; this becomes a way of life. Always edgy, ready to go until its view of reality is not necessarily skewed, but accepted as truth. It has been taught, so to expect the *hot* horse to suddenly change is unfounded. He or she *knew* how to operate in the environment, he knew how to in essence, survive. Just because the retired horse is given a relaxed and low key environment doesn't mean it will automatically accept it or feel comfortable within it. Often times yes, the adaptable nature of the horse will allow it to blend in nicely over time. Yet there are also situations when the horse cannot readily adjust, mental illness and aberrations fill them becoming potential withholds, and socialization techniques need be investigated and subsequently implemented.

If one end of the spectrum has inherent truth, so then, must the opposing end. In the never ending search for harmony and balance the horse seeks, idleness, confinement and too little stimulus, are factors that also heighten stress. The horse was designed by evolution as a grazing, herding, prey animal. These facts require movement to not only find feed and water, but to also feel safe and compliment the social design of the band. Along the way we have the constant stimulus of herd shuffling, play, and all other social activities. Constriction of movement, confinement and isolation are all highly stressful situations that can lead to many EMI's for the horse. Idle hands know only mischief, my grandmother always told me; can it not be true for the horse as well? Attachment disorders here occur most often. Equine Cabin Fever being one of the secondary signs of protracted confinement and isolation depressions that leads into Equine Abandonment Syndrome. The initial signs can range from pacing, chewing, head bobbing and any number of *odd* activities. I give you the following as an example of what this must feel like for the horse, and how the *aberrations*, are manifested as truth and reality. When you are alone in a strange place, or someone's home, my grandparents' old farm house comes to mind for me, things take on very different appearances. You have nothing but time and isolation on your hands, and your senses slowly become more acute, and your interpretations of the environment may well begin to change with it. You're ok for a while sure, and with a daily routine in and out, you will be fine. But when your routine is changed, when you know that no one is coming to be with you, to reassure you, to comfort you, after a period of time you will find yourself clinging to things and creating comfort mentally by maybe holding a teddy bear, a doll, the child who sleeps with his or her blanket to keep the monster away? Isolation is a mind game, even for those of us with reason, and it can take on a frightful demeanor. The sun goes down, there is little light, your senses are on high alert, you can't rest, what was that rustling sound; you want someone to be with you, but you dare not invite them now, who is it? Is it the tree limb; is it someone or something else? The world closes in on you and the tighter the mental constriction, the higher your levels of stress and anxiety. You stay awake all night, waiting for something to happen, nothing does really, but not

in your mind, in your mind anything could have happened. Over time you withdraw, becoming opposite of what you were and should be, happiness is no longer measured in laughter and careless play, it is measured within the safety of becoming invisible. In time, even when you are finally with others, there is still something that holds you back. You have been scorned, by love maybe? Never to give in again, letting your guard down is to invite potential disaster, the struggle between reaching out and holding in, slowly tearing you apart until, when you are at last truly in a safe environment, a safe relationship, you have difficulty in holding on to it, keeping up your end of the bargain, fearful it will stay, fearful it will leave. Your interpretation of stimulus greatly affected it takes time and understanding to reach beyond the scars. The greatest potential withhold is the sense of isolation amidst the crowd. You are hardly able to hold a conversation with a stranger, you are afraid of something new, afraid of the unknown, you feel comfort only when completely in control and alone, you are the horse in confinement.

### III

Uncovering the potential withholds, the *hidden* antagonist that is Equine Mental Illness, requires mental supplements that can affectively break the mold, indeed, manipulating the manner in which stimulus is understood. The foundation from which all *learned* mental illnesses occur in the horse, at any degree of severity, lay directly within the communication dynamics that operate between the Acquired Instincts and the Basic Instincts, making the triggers that associate the two halves together, both your keys to averting an issue, and the mechanism that allows it to manifest. Breaking the mold of potential withholds of the *mind*, so to speak, is thus directly associated with manipulating the triggers that become the associated memories, a process called Associative Training Stimulus, or *ATS*. *ATS* is the resultant steps taken after an investigation is done towards a determination of what the primary causes are, and what the secondary causes are which influence the primary. To define *primary cause*, or *primary triggers*, is to understand what the stimulus is that affects the outcome directly. To simplify this, when you enter your stall everyday at 5 in the afternoon with a bucket of feed, the horse knows exactly what is about to happen for him. You and your feed bucket are indeed, a primary cause of action. Secondary cause, or *associative cause*, becomes something that initiated the anticipation. At 4:30 you may enter the barn, this act alone very well may create a stir in the stable, and when you head off to the feed room and make some noise, well look out, your next movements are watched, and keenly anticipated. It is in this area of *associative cause*, where both the trouble, and the magic, lay. Primary causes and secondary causes are key elements; primary can exist without the preceding associative cause, but the secondary cause cannot exist without there being a primary. A mistake is made when one tries to re-socialize the off track horse, or indeed, train any horse, to respond accurately simply on the basis of associations. The secret behind the *ATS* process is in

the way in which the new *layers* are placed over existing associated memories, or in effect, layered over the trigger mechanisms. Layering allows you to manipulate the way in which stimuli is interpreted based on presentation and outcome. The horse is wired in such a way that in order for him to make sense of the world and how he or she is supposed to respond to any new stimulus, there must first be a direct *result* from a direct *trigger*. It is the way in which the equine assembles his puzzle of life. That is why we must always respond immediately with reward or stern response, leaving very little space in between for an associated trigger to become the ghost that will haunt our efforts in much later times. Learning in reverse, in a way, assists greatly in our understanding of the horse's point of view. This is a manifestation of many socially aligned prey animals, and this allows them to survive. If this mechanism was not in place, the horse would lose its most powerful weapon, lightning fast response. Inherently, it is this very process of associated *learning*, that creates many of the potential withholds that keeps your otherwise top athlete, from the ribbon or the winners' circle on a consistent basis. Training for long term goals is only useful for the human athlete or trainer. Long term goals for the horse only reach as far as his or her next experience, or perhaps as far as his *anticipation* will send him. For both the hunter and the hunted, survival is dependent upon the senses and the interpretation of stimulus, it is how that stimulus is associated with an outcome, seen or imagined, that creates the space for potential withholds. This is the reason why your horse, in one instance seems to respond to your direct stimulus very quickly, smoothly, and without a seam, and yet another time, there is a diversion or hesitation, or an outcome altogether different than what there should have been. Along the way there has been a secondary cause that suddenly puts its weight upon the primary, often times skewing the outcome just a bit too much. For the socially dependent horse, there can be a plethora of different causes all within the natural herd dynamics. That is, the environmental aspects and the social aspects. Placements in the stable, field, water supplies, the habits around them from humans, are all environmental stimuli. The horse is acutely sensitive to all things around them, and the levels of stress rise and fall, directly influencing how information is received. Affects of which go unseen, and indeed, never thought of, until your performance horse isn't quite performing to the levels he or she should be. Just as the constriction of physical space is very daunting for your horse, equally so, is the constriction of the emotional space, a truth that transcends beyond our horse counterparts for sure.

The key to unlocking the gate and letting your horse run free in both body and mind, is creating space. The creation of *space* is the magic wand that can do the most good for your horse. Without true emotional supplements, the strangling grip of potential withholds are almost impossible to pry away. The very process that is Associative Training Stimulus is a matter of developing individualized distractions. In order to affectively cleanse the horse of emotional disorders enrichment therapies must slowly be put in place. Affectively challenging the horses' senses an associative thought processes is very important. Making the horse, in a manner of speaking, to have to *wonder* just what an anticipated outcome might actually be, starts the process of layering. Layering in this situation is what happens when the same *secondary cause* is subsequently linked to a different *primary cause* that leads to an anticipated outcome. The

creation of different results stemming from the same stimulus or affect is also powerful therapy for the horse. This type of enrichment *therapy of opposition* is highly beneficial when dealing with several issues accompanying the emotionally convalescing horse. We too often make the mistake of associating the *convalescing horse* with the horse that is trying to heal from a physical wound or impairment when indeed horses also need time to convalesce on an emotional level as well. Not unlike the grieving elephant. Have a visit to rescue center for horses...and try to convince yourself that those horses are not in need of emotional convalescence. Because physical injury and learning to live with impairments is as much an emotional struggle as it is a physical one, Light Touch Therapy, or LTT, was developed to address both issues simultaneously. LTT serves to free the mind and stimulate the body, freeing the horse from any number of stresses. For the horse dealing with such disorders as Herding Holdup or any number of social distortions including Equine Abandonment Syndrome (EAS) and its first cousin, Equine Cabin Fever, the development of leadership stylized enrichment and socialization therapies go far in *freeing* the horse from himself. Continued work in this area serves as life coaching for the horse.

Not all social or emotional disorders facing horses being introduced to new *careers* are the same. Equine Abandonment Syndrome, EAS, has an equally evil twin, which operates on nearly the same dynamics, yet with very different players. If we allow the fact that there are varying degrees of confinement disorders, we must then allow for the fact, that the opposite is also true. For example among the most deplorable and troublesome issues facing horses coming off the race track to the rescue farm, is Human Attachment Disorder. HAD is in essence, the *institutionalized equine*, which is very much like the human dealing with *recovery* or who, having known life in a penitentiary for many years, and having assimilated to that environment and know how to survive within it, is suddenly released. The horse happily adapted to confinement of space and too little equine contact in pasture that has assimilated to the human as *band mate* suddenly having contact in a field with other horses, is now in a world that they are not accustomed to. They do not know just how to be a horse, in a way, and therefore there is generated a very high degree of stress and worry, and the environment is skewed, unfriendly, and they do not know how to survive affectively within it. The horse's awesome powers of adaptability and the natural processes of Assimilated Imprinting, allow them to have lived quite comfortably in a not so *natural* environment. We must keep in mind that here also; it is the freeing power of the emotional stimulus, which allows the horse to survive without accompanying social disorders. The horse in nearly constant human contact sees the human as the herd, so to speak. Take that away and a sudden barrage of institutionalized Human Attachment Disorders, begin to manifest. Here too, opposing but similar enrichment type therapies need be put in place. It is not unlike the person who is trying to teach the orphaned bear cub to find its own food, and shelter, and how to react to danger. The horse taken from the family structure is in essence, also an orphan. Without the natural social orders of the herd dynamic in place, it is the surrogate family that must do the teaching. This is a serious issue if we are truly to rehabilitate and resurrect the retired and off track horse. This is why it is most important for the horse to be imprinted properly in its very early years, and kept in as natural a herd dynamic as

can be, for as long as can be. What happens then has a lot to do with how the horse's Acquired Instinct Dynamic interprets associative stimuli in the future. The exact reason that something your horse experienced five years before, might abruptly, dangerously and very unexpectedly erupt, is because the Acquired Instinct and all its coefficients are the governing factors influencing the Basic Instinct.

## IV

THT Frontline of works is geared toward pioneering new research and service developments that address these and other issues by bridging the gap between the *natural horse* and the *clinical horse* realm. Emotional supplements must be given as much attention as do the other kinds of supplements that horse and owner have access to. If nature and indeed, evolution have and continue to develop an animal so well equipped to suite any number of environs, to adapt, indeed *assimilate* with such ease to a multitude of changes, why should we overlook the obvious. It is more the emotional adaptability of the horse that is its key to survival and success. Therefore it is also true that this is the main area of potential withholds your horse is experiencing. Physically the horse is still a horse. Unless learning to live with physical impairments, the only true challenges to training a horse lay imbedded within. In essence, physically the horse can easily live in very different environments, from the rocky mountains of Wyoming and Montana to the sandy dunes on Assateague Island in Maryland. If it is indeed the horse's emotional adaptability that is so very alluring and magical for us why that should be neglected is a question without a good answer? Yet it is often an unbalanced ratio. Too often we focus on the athlete's body 90%, the mind, 10%. For as large as a 1,000 pound animal's body is, it is strikingly small in relative comparison to the capacity of the mind, as it is with us as well. The idea that the opposite is true is an aberration of the horse, neglectful and ignorant of the truth. As it is with most living creatures of any capacity to learn and adapt the *mind* interprets information, which thus drives the body's reaction to it. The use of Reserpine or any other long acting anti-psychotic drug to handle or *ease the horse into* an environment, new or not, should be, if at all, used as nothing more than a tool for safety, not an answer to the problem. Too often we fall victim to our own desires and concepts, to our own *universe*, and thus fall very short in our communication with the things around us for lack of concern. We like to pretend that just because something has no obvious and immediate affect over our lives and our goals; it then has little demand for our attention. Far too often are we mindless of the power of our presence when with horses. It is said that whatever we research we also change, and this is because we change the environment. We

must remember that our very presence, even when indirect, changes the environment and therefore influences the horse within that environment. Investing in a magnificent facility for your horse's living conditions pales in comparison to the investment that should be made into the actual horse. Supplementing your training facility with all great human-friendly amenities, should not override the efforts to supplement the horse on an emotional level. Imprinting is a fact of life for the adaptable horse, and it happens in two ways. One is the intermittent stimulus that is delivered by the social aspects of life; the human or the natural family structures and interactions while the other contributions are the continuous environmental imprinting which allow the horse to adapt to the changes in his or her environment. Developing the techniques that properly utilize these very normal and naturally occurring aspects of the horse, is paramount to addressing the overall health and wellness of the horse, especially with the athlete. Manipulating the interpretation of stimulus is the key to unveiling many of the enigmas found within the horse and is *equine psychotherapy technique development*, in its purest form.

We have thus established that the greatest impediment to success and health are the potential withholds that go unseen or are expressed but not realized. THT is geared toward investigating and finding solutions to these and other issues based upon the natural herd dynamics. We believe that it is possible to reflect back a bit of the enigma and see another view. Taking a view from the hoof often means looking beyond perceptions. For onward we must endeavor if we are to continue to learn more today than we knew yesterday, that we may have more to offer the world, tomorrow.

KMT