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Key Components for Becoming an

EQUINE
EXPERT



Presented by Kathleen Rossi + PB&J Barrel Horse Foundation



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INTRODUCTION

You don't need to have a cabinet full of trophies, case of belt buckles or have to come from a ranching heritage to learn how to become an equine expert.

Obtaining a medical degree, logging hours in a clinical lab, or hanging an embossed piece of paper framed in your office doesn't necessarily qualify the know-how of providing top-knotch care for your horse.

PB&J Barrel Horse Foundation has taken the grunt work out of trouble-shooting with your horse. Even if you've done extensive research about horse care, this ebook will add another level of dimension into your quest for being a better partner for your equine.

The foundation of health every horse demands, begins and ends with honoring their Mental, Physical, and Emotional state. Learning how to be perceptive of these specific components of horse care, guarantees your journey with horses will be enhanced to an expert level. The breakdown is simple, but the process might not be easy.

The result of a horse that is successful at what he does is no accident. No matter the discipline the horse excels at; it is in direct congruence with the trifecta of components in the foundation of health. Integrating these keys together is essential for good care.

The 3 components (Mental, Physical, Emotional) apply to both humans and horses directly. Perhaps the most popular reason for working in some realm of this industry is the sheer enjoyment of being around the nature of the horse themselves. Horses have offered us a great deal through the centuries of mankind. Over the years we have also learned how to provide better care in return. Regardless of the amount of time passed, the foundational element of caring for the horse's Mental, Physical and Emotional state will remain unchanged.

In most cases, the human and horse work together to achieve a desired outcome. The odds of the desired outcome developing to fruition will exponentially increase when the human can apply awareness to his own Mental, Physical and Emotional state.

It's a common belief that it takes teamwork to make the dream work. And that's why this ebook is written for you, just as much as it's dedicated to the horse. Integrated Equine's mission is *to teach relationship building between horse and human and to develop an intimate understanding of horse psychology and physiology through progressive horse keeping*. Please use this simple system to enhance your current program with horses.



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(Mental, Physical, Emotional)
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Psychology, communication, and understanding can trump using mechanics, fear and intimidation which leads to higher quality responses and results in optimal prey animal performance.

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KEY #1: MENTAL

Horse Thinking

Horses function on four primary instincts: Safety, comfort, food, and social interaction with herd members. To illustrate importance of these aspects let's use, "A *Barn Sour Horse*" as an analogy. Any horse can act 'barn sour' away from home because they have all four things instinctual needs met when near the barn. They'll exhibit displaced behavior away from 'home' because they feel *safer* and more *comfortable* with their herd they *eat* and *play* with. It is quite literally the nature of horse behavior.

There are inarguable elements of equine physiology and psychology that we can't change. However, we can influence these four things, by accommodating them in a way that suits us both and creates a partnership. *You* can be your horse's source of safety as the lead mare. *You* can be your horse's sense of comfort by providing for his innate needs. *You* can feed him in a way that will support his digestive health. And *you* can even provide forms of play and mental stimulation for your horse through your social interaction with him.

As a prey animal, horses have the innate ability to learn quickly by motive of survival. They are a precocial species; from the moment they drop from the mare they are perceptive to danger and situations that could be potentially dangerous. Simply: if they are “slow” mentally or slow physically they won’t last too long in the wild.

Perhaps the most vitally important fact is that a horse (a prey animal) learns differently than a dog (a predator). *Conditioned responses, the praise/reward theory, and behavior disciplined with force are the most ineffective ways to train a horse.* A zebra cannot change his stripes; a horse cannot change how he feels, thinks, acts and plays. It is our responsibility to appropriately accommodate the way a horse’s psychology was created in his natural state.

Human Thinking

It’s not far-fetched to say that as humans we are motivated by: praise, recognition and material objects. We say that we compete because we love our horses, but if we don’t come home with souvenir proof we did well at the show we are disappointed. As humans we want others to notice our good work, give us a pat on the back and reward us with something material for our efforts. Would we honestly put in the hours at the barn if we didn’t have something to show for it?



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More than having just a 'souvenir' type of lifestyle, I believe we crave fellowship created in relationships. Part of the reason we train so hard, is so that we can ride our horses with our friends. We have to keep all this in balance with how our horse thinks too. One way to keep it in balance is to commit to keep learning. How can we increase our mentality to better serve the horse? Is the majority what you learned about horses from your grandparents 20 years ago? Or is it reflective of the true and natural state of how a horse learns?

An "investment" type of lifestyle may be more well-suited for the person striving to become an equine expert. This means instead of having something to show for every little thing we've participated in, we walk by the faith that the seeds we've sown in relation to our horse training will benefit us the next day in the arena. Quality results with horses aren't always dependent on genetics, chance or luck - most the time quality results are gleaned from quality time spent learning how to procure quality results. It's no coincidence that if investing in learning increases, the rewards will increase as well.



What is needed to survive and thrive in a physical sense? Fresh air, real food, frequent water intake, consistent exercise... Experts apply these to promote the health of the body.



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KEY #2: PHYSICAL

Horse Body

The simplest protocol of having a physically sound horse is to be constantly consistent. A horse provided with forage constantly, moves constantly, and drinks constantly is one that'll be consistently healthy. This is the model nature created for us to duplicate and emulate.

We know it's not reasonable to have our horse's roaming out on the range like a mustang and still be able to use them on a frequent basis. But we need to be thinking of ways we can mimic the natural rhythms of how the horse would survive sans stable.

Horses have constant gut function, they never stop producing stomach acid which drives the need to graze 17 hours per day. Grazing requires constant movement. Traveling 30 miles a day is typical for a feral horse, while 12 miles per day is typical for a domesticated one. Horses need unrestricted access to water and minerals to survive. For such a simple design, it's remarkable how far

we've strayed from accommodating this biological truth. Convenience feeding will produce health issues. Anything other than simulating prolonged social grazing is at work against good health.

Reflection on the fact that a domesticated horse in our barn is *biologically no different* than a free range mustang, allows us the framework provide a good foundation of health. A feedlot mentality is not supportive of creative solutions experts can offer their horses. Hundreds of years of bad habits is no match for thousands of years of surviving in the wild.



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Human Body

Our bodies are a wondrous thing. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Each of us is a both a miracle and a masterpiece in the making. Nothing else like us roams the planet. In fact – we're advised that we should take care of our bodies as if they are a temple! They are our physical vehicle of transportation through life from start to finish – no molting, or regenerating appendages for us. Similar and slightly more finicky than a temple or car; we have to put good in -to get good out.

Since our bodies seem to be extremely high functioning and highly adaptable it is easy for us to forget about them! Our bodies are also uniquely individual from person to person, making it easy to compare ourselves to the way others look and exude a certain lifestyle. Contrary to this, it should NOT be easy to relinquish the power of influence we have over our health. Fundamentally, we all need the same things.

How we receive them and how often is up to us.

2. Key #2: Physical

Fresh air and sun light seem like a no-brainer, but our brains do need copious amounts to function optimally. All food is not created equal - in fact if it is CREATED whatsoever (processed or GMO) it is not food at all. Dehydration is a factor among most people. Less than 100 ounces of water daily and the body is being deprived. Circulation of all our bodies systems is dependent upon movement, and frequent movement at that. Depending on what activities we like to participate in, our bodies should be conditioned and supported through movement to execute that. And last and but not least - deem rest unnegotiable. We seem to get the least of rest when we know it's best! Honoring the soft whispers of our bodies asking for a break is much wiser choice than submitting to the screams from a body being neglected.

If we are not physically healthy, we won't be able to perform at a high functioning level for our horses. Our balance, coordination, and ability to do horse-type activities directly relates to how we treat our own bodies. Health doesn't have to be hard if appropriate choices are made habit over a last stitch effort.





One will run faster and jump higher out of heart and desire.

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KEY #3: EMOTIONAL

Horse Emotion

Horses. They live in the moment, and their emotions are characterized by such. We often don't think as horses being emotional beings - but in the wild the way they live and die is characterized how they feel. Remember how we discussed a horse's biological need to be safe, comfortable, food, and play in a herd setting? Anytime those categories are out of balance a horse's emotion associated with them are out of whack too.

The easiest emotion that is identifiable to us is fear. Perhaps this is true because as a predator hunting prey, fear is the first thing exhibited when the prey animal realizes the predator is on to him! This could also be the case since fear and pain often have direct correlations. A horse that is unsound/injured in the wild better watch out because he's automatically the weak link and a threat to his herd - easy pickin-s for the predator in the bushes. In this analogy we can observe that 'safety' and 'comfort' are automatically compromised.

Using fear as our emotional example, we also see that horse who are scared won't eat or socialize in a playful manner. A horse that is fearful certainly won't but his vulnerable head down to eat - which interrupts his bodies need to graze 17 hours a day - which interrupts his gut function. When a horse is physically in pain from not being able to eat, his mannerisms in herd socialization change.


Pain and emotion are often linked together and reference one another. There is also proof that pain and emotion take the same pathways through neurons in the brain. Learning to read our horse's emotions (the multitude of them) can help us address training issues as well as physical issues we might be dealing with. When we have the ability to understand the problem through observance we can take specific actions to change the outcome; often without masking it with drugs or devices.

Human Emotion

Emotions and feelings are one of the hardest things to keep tamed in the human mind and heart. We can get on a horse and make ourselves feel better or worse than when we got on. Too many times we will hop on with: a negative feeling, coupled with an unreasonable expectation, which is followed by an undesired result.

We also have influence of making our horse feel better or worse than when we got on. A horse that senses our emotion will either take *flight from that emotion* or *fight with that emotion*. It all comes down to focus and intention of where our emotions are. If we are in a balanced state emotionally its more likely we will influence the horses state of emotions positively.

Having awareness of what we think and feel is paramount to a healthy partnership. It will transfer through our actions. We can avoid making regrettable mistakes if we strive to let our emotions be suited to what the horse needs versus what we are worried about. Luckily, we are different than animals in that we can control ourselves. We can be powerful in a constructive way with our emotions because we make appropriate choices of how to carry them out.



The horse doesn't care what you wear, until he knows how much you care.



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CONCLUSION

It doesn't matter what scale of success is desired, to have true partnership with horses requires an integrated approach to managing these three characteristics.

Having a simple foundation of consideration for the state of human and horse mental, physical, and emotional reality is essential to being an expert with horses. Expert knowledge of how to make desired results a reality is **NOT** about a certain brand of training, nor is it an idolized method of horse-keeping. It **is** a manner in which you can identify the true needs in a horse or yourself.

Kathleen's mission is to teach relationship building between horse and human and to develop an intimate understanding of horse psychology and physiology through progressive horse keeping. PB&J Barrel Horse Foundation's mission is to build an appetite for transformation.

RESOURCES

Mental:

Consider a monthly membership for equine education from one of these recommended training programs. There are many sites dedicated to YOUR personal development, which may be more beneficial than shelling out money and time for one on one lessons with a trainer.

www.drleaf.com

Dr. Caroline Leaf has spent the last 30 years researching the mind-brain connection, nature of mental health and formation of memory. She was one of the first in her field to study how the brain can change with directed mind input (neuroplasticity).

www.barbraschulte.com

“The Most Concise, Research Based, 10 Step Confidence Building Information Available For Riders of All Disciplines.”

Physical:

Do you believe you can be healthy? Consider diving into these sources for more guidance. Life changing practices are around the corner; all that’s needed is a little research for big payoff.

www.thehorse.com

“Your guide to equine health care”

Emotional:

Emotions are a temporary state of mind, don’t let them permanently destroy progress you’ve made with your horse or yourself! Wake up and be ready for whatever is thrown at you that day, read something worthwhile.

www.blueletterbible.org

“Blue Letter Bible is dedicated to encourage people to come to know and love Jesus Christ through the study of Scripture.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Early on, Kathleen saw a need for the equine industry to accommodate the disconnect commonly found between practitioners and horse owners. Integrated Equine began serving its customers in 2010 with a streamlined service that combined Natural Hoofcare, Natural Horsemanship, and consultation about Progressive Horse-keeping. This type of 'integrated' service was the first of its kind, as horse owners would have previously employed several practitioners to achieve a well-rounded result for their horse.

Kathleen has a formal education in hoof care, horsemanship and equine bodywork. She was a pioneer in being able to publically teach from multiple platforms about combining the multiple subjects. The opportunity to learn and teach in such specialized fields was a unique journey. This allowed her to dedicate time with multiple masters within the industry of horse training and horse care.

She has instructed clinics and workshops all over the United States focusing on horse and human health with laser therapy, offered public lessons in horsemanship, and provided hoof care for clients. While she concentrates her services in primarily helping in the Western Performance world, she has experience from foundation training colts to athletes in the English discipline.

She has since updated her business model and how she serves, and transitioned Integrated Equine to PB&J Barrel Horse Foundation. Currently, she trains colts for a future in barrel racing by instilling a solid foundation in them first. She offers an internship program for those looking to have a career in the horse world. In addition to riding, she also has a writing career where her outreach program helps folks in need outside the horse-world.

PB&J Barrel Horse Foundation's mission is : an appetite for transformation. She invites you to join the journey with horses on her website www.pbjbarrelhorses.com and www.hecarriedme.com

