



Equine Epiphany™

The Great Horse Do-Over

***How To Start With a Clean Slate
and Build the Relationship of Your Dreams
With Your Horse***

An E-Book Gift to you

***By
Maggie Johnson
Intuitive Horsemanship Coach***

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I Get It. Really.

You and I have been there. Tolerating our horses' annoying and scary behaviors. Stuck in frustration, at the limit of what we know about horses. I have been in tears of despair and hopelessness, unable to find anyone who could really, truly help me with my horse. I have been in that place, possibly where you are now. I want you to know that you're exactly where you are meant to be, and that your life with horses is about to change for the better.

Undesirable horse behaviors are not only fixable, but also largely PREVENTABLE. You already invest time and money to keep your horses safe and healthy with preventive care, and I want you to know that you can do the same with your horses' behavior, without selling the horse, or sending it to a trainer.

As an Equine Behavior Specialist, I gather volumes of new, cutting-edge knowledge from the world of Equine Behavior Science. Some big chunks of that information are right here in this E-Book for you! Hundreds of students have experienced the difference this makes in our training sessions.

By the way, that horse who no-one could help me with? That's Homer, who you see pictured on this page. His extreme behavior was the catalyst for me to seek help with many amazing horsepeople all over the world, way beyond traditional riding training. My most memorable studies were in Ireland with the International Society for Equitation Science, and in Tucson with Linda Kohanov, author of *The Tao of Equus*. I was on a mission to fix my horse. What really happened was that Homer fixed me! What?!! He helped to shift my paradigm about how we can all be better for our horses.

I coach people to expand what they already know, to sharpen their ability to read their horses' subtle behavior. I explain not just "how", but more importantly: WHY. This expanded perspective will open the door to what you seek in horses. Your horse will grow to be a connected, responsive collaborator with you.

I can help you to see that the horse of your dreams could be inside the horse you already have.



Wow – no ropes! Maggie found the keys to motivating horses to WANT to do what she wants. 3



You Get A Do-Over!

When we get a horse of our own, we have a dream and a vision of what that horse's potential is, and what our life will be like together. Take two minutes to return to that place of joy and excitement, and really feel what it was like. Think about that – when you first acquired your horse, what was the dream? What would your life together be like – what were your goals and ambitions?

So, what happened to that dream, your vision for the life you wanted with your horse? Is it still intact, or do you feel like your horse has failed you? Perhaps you are feeling like a failure yourself. Maybe you're tolerating your horse's behaviors, just to get through the day! It's possible that you have some latent fear that is making you avoid spending time with your horse. Or, perhaps you are more like me, when I was sabotaging myself without even knowing it! A million things can chip away at your dream, slowly but surely. Then, you end up in a place of disempowerment, of hopeless, helpless stuckness.

I want you to know that you did not completely cause the problems you are having. That's right – it's not all your fault! We have all skipped a step in our evolution as equestrians and modern horse people – the step where we learn as much as we can about horse culture, and about the horse as a sentient social species. So, our equestrian culture has rather failed to teach this essential part of horsemanship and equestrian arts.

The fallout from this is most often revealed through riding instructors and horse trainers who are able to explain how to do something, but not able to accurately explain why to do it, from the horse's point of view. We have all seen people seek better results with martingales, draw reins, longer spurs, and bits with more leverage. Often, what's necessary is two things: a clear understanding of why the horse behaves in certain ways, and what your appropriate response would be, from your horse's cultural point of view. In other words, if you understand your horse, you have a better chance of being understood by your horse.

It's okay if your trainer and friends can't help you with this – the good news is that you can quickly learn it yourself. I'm totally serious about that. If I could do this, so can you! I did not grow up with horses and really connected with them over a couple of childhood summers of riding lessons. Growing up in the city, I just didn't have access to all things equestrian.

My journey with horses really began in 1995, when my young daughter expressed interest in riding lessons. Over the following few years, I saw many amateur and professional horsepeople completely who misunderstood their horses, often with disastrous results. I wanted more. I wanted to be better, and I wanted the horses to be the judges of that. So, I leaped into the world of Equine Ethology, and spent more than a decade discovering loads of information about who horses really are. This information is my gift to you. I want you use it to be better than me!

So, you have permission to give yourself a do-over. The first step is to discover and respect what is important to your horse, and use that to inform your training. What you will experience is like having a reset button! Your horse will begin to change his or her mind about you, and will be able to collaborate with you as a happy, willing partner.

The Clean Slate Pathway

To get a Do-Over, It's necessary to clear the negative thoughts that you and your horse have about each other. It's a process that begins with you. Here goes:

- 1) Garner a deeper understanding of Equine culture (you're doing it right now by reading this book!).
- 2) Take that new knowledge and apply it to how you observe your horse's behavior. Learn how to read your horse's behavior as valuable informational feedback.
- 3) Re-frame your conclusions, and allow your thinking to shift.
- 4) Learn why your particular horse behaves in particular ways.
- 5) Allow yourself a Do-Over by learning new or expanded skills, and testing them out in your new paradigm.
- 6) Refine the process as a feedback loop, where you're continually listening, assessing, adjusting and recommitting.



This is the path I continue to take. When I get stuck or surprised by my horse, I revisit the question, “WHY is he doing that?” I find the possible answer, and take a Do-Over. Horses’ nature is to forgive and avoid conflict in the herd. So, you can have as many Do-Overs as you need. As you absorb more knowledge, you’ll become more able to see the difference between the times when your horse is saying “I can’t” and when he’s saying “I won’t”, and you’ll be able to build your relationship by responding appropriately to either one. Your horse will perceive being understood, and will think about you in a new way. That’s when you’ll see changes in behavior. It begins with you!

The Special Qualities and Talents of Species Equus Caballus

- ❖ Herd Animals – Social and nomadic.
- ❖ Prey Animals – Herbivores who are eaten by large predators – lions and man.
- ❖ Flight Animals – Built to run from danger, quick reaction time.
- ❖ HIGHLY PERCEPTIVE to the physical and energetic environment, to changes in environment and companions' body language, and to the intentions of others.
- ❖ EXCELLENT MEMORY of experiences, places, sounds, smells, objects, people.
- ❖ SUPER SPEED and agility: The fastest horse was clocked at 55 mph!

Sight

Excellent eyesight means the difference between life and death for horses. Literally seeing trouble coming is the best way the horse has to make it to safety before a predator gets too close. Horses have excellent depth-perception, and detail / pattern perception. Their narrow heads with eyes on either side provide the ability to take in more of the view than humans do. When their heads are facing forward, horses have a nearly 180-degree field of vision, with small blind spots in front and back. Horses also have much better night vision than humans.

Hearing

If you look at the shape of the horse's ear, you can see that it's built sort of like a funnel. With this design, the ear can capture sound in its outer part and channel it down into the ear canal. Using very mobile ears, horses constantly monitor the world around them. Just imagine trying to pay complete attention to different sounds coming in to either ear at the same time. A horse can take in the sounds of a car driving by, children playing, a bird chirping and a human approaching, all at once, from different places in the environment, then process that information and make split-second decisions about whether to react — all while picking out the best blades of pasture grass or walking down a rocky trail. Talk about multi-tasking! Horses can also hear higher ultrasound, a range of frequencies above and below that of human hearing.

Smell

Horses use smell to detect predators, and as part of their complicated social structure, greeting each other nose to nose, each taking in the odor of the other. Horses also come to recognize each other by scent as well as by sight. Mares and foals quickly memorize each other's scents and use this information to help locate each other in a crowd of horses. Most horses also greet humans in the same way. When you introduce yourself to a horse for the first time, notice how the horse reaches out his muzzle to sniff you.

Touch

Although many people think that horses have a tough hide, they really don't. Their skin is tougher than our human epidermis, but it is still rich with nerve endings. Horses are sensitive to electrical currents and static electricity in the wind. Horses use touch to communicate with each other. Mothers reassure their babies with a brush of the muzzle; pair-buddies scratch each other's itches with their teeth. Humans can also use touch to convey messages to the horse. A gentle rub down, a hand on the shoulder, a scratch in just the right place — these are all ways of saying, "I'm your friend" to a horse.

Time for a Myth-Buster!



Some folks, even top trainers will tell you that horses are not capable of rational thought, due to the horse's tiny brain, about the size of a walnut. None of that is true. There is current scientific evidence that horses do have some capacity to reason. Also, a walnut weighs about 15 grams; a horse's brain weighs between 400–700 grams.

Here's something to think about: horses have intelligence that is appropriate for their species. Humans also have intelligence that is appropriate for our species. We humans tend to expect that horses think as we think, and that the things that are important to us should be important to them. We couldn't be more wrong about that! Take a look at the chart below. The things that represent satisfying our most basic primary needs are not all the same!

What's Important?		
Primary Need	Horse's Point of View	Human Point of View
Safety	The Herd, Alpha Mare, Grooming buddy	Our Cave, Castle, Home. Police.
Comfort	Familiar sights, sounds, and smells. A nice rub or scratch. Rest. Grooming. Freedom to move. Rolling. Swishing flies with a pair-buddy.	The Familiar. Kindness. A Hug. Affirmation. A Pat On the Back. Food. Empathy from Friends.
Play / Fun	Nibbling, running, leaping and bucking, playing tag, investigating, dominance games.	Sports, Video Games, Music, Board Games, Skill Games
Food & Water	Grain, grass, hay, seeds, moss, weeds, twigs, leaves, bark, roots, dirt.	Meat & Potatoes, Ice Cream, Fried Chicken, Pizza, chocolate, dairy foods, eggs, vegetables, grains.



Life In THE HERD



We can learn amazing lessons about horse culture by observing herd behaviors. Wild equids rarely live alone, but in family or bachelor groups. Family groups usually have a single adult stallion and an alpha mare. Family groups are generally led by mares, and studies have shown that in feral herds, the mares were the dominant and most aggressive, not the stallions. There is generally one lead or alpha mare, making all the decisions about where the herd will graze, drink, and rest.

Imagine a non-stop picnic at which the guests are all from one family. This is life in the feral equid herd. The mares and babies hang out together. Kids play together. Mothers watch over their own as well as other's visiting foals, whose own mothers in turn get to spend some time with their adult friends. The older siblings "baby-sit" their younger brothers or sisters, leaving their parents free to concentrate on the buffet, on spending time with the family leadership, or disciplining the kids when necessary. Turns are taken by all adults to keep a watch about the perimeter of the group, with the junior-ranked spending a greater time in keeping watch, and they are then welcomed back into the center of the party, while others take their places on duty. Should danger threaten, the whole group is able to react quickly, forming a line of escape set by the highest status female (alpha mare), and with the stallion falling back to keep stragglers from being left behind.

Foals stay close to their mothers' sides, and begin to associate with other foals to form peer groups during the first week of life. Primary social bonding is in kinship groups at weaning, which takes place naturally at around 8-9 months. Young colts remain with their natal groups until between the ages of 1 to 2.5 years when they are asked to leave to form their own bachelor groups. The majority of fillies are asked to leave when they reach 1.5 to 2.5 years old, to join other existing harems or form new ones with males from bachelor groups.

Horses readily form social order. Equine society is based on kinship, recognition, and respecting another's space. The existence of an "avoidance order" in established groups is a good measure of their social system, as subordinate individuals will deliberately avoid moving close to dominant ones, while staying close to their pair-bonded buddy.

The formation of pair bonds is an important feature of equine behavior. It occurs within groups through preferences for particular companions. Bonded pairs associate closely, grazing and resting together, standing nose-to-tail swishing flies, and they indulge in bouts of mutual grooming (allo-grooming). Equines are so adaptable, and their need to pair-bond is so strong, that single domesticated horses will pair bond with other species such as donkeys or goats, and even with predatory species such as humans, dogs and cats.

Here's some empirical information from the world of Equine Ethology Science. This really served to shift what I think about why horses do what they do!

Categories & Actions	Description	Social context and function
Safety Close distance Nearest neighbor Approach & Follow		All horses with their preferred partners, regardless of age. Mothers maintain close distance with their foals; yearlings maintain close distance with their mothers. Preferred partners rest together. Function is individual bonding and group cohesion.
Investigation Nose-nose contact Nose-body contact	Sniffing, often without direct skin contact	Nose-nose sniffing during greeting. Nose-elbow and nose-flank contact typical for stallion encounters and courtship. Nose-genital contacts during courtship and stallion encounters. Function is olfactory information and transmission.
Comfort Rubbing Mutual grooming	Flat side of the head against any other body-part. Rhythmical scratching with incisors. Preferred site at base of neck.	Rubbing and allo-grooming is shown from the first week of age, throughout the life of every horse, rubbing in connection with insects. Grooming exchanged between preferred partners. Mother-foal-yearling, father-foal, and peer group for all ages. Low-ranking individuals groom more and initiate more groomings. Function is bonding, group cohesion and appeasement. Allo-grooming at the base of the neck reduces heart rate.
Play Bite Head toss Rear Chase Circle Kick	Ear position not flat against neck. Most frequent bites at throat, base of neck and legs. Foreleg kicks during rearing. Circling around each other in attempt to bite legs. Kicks during chase.	Starting at two weeks. Colts play more (bites, rear, chase) and longer than fillies, who kick more often. Frequency of play peaks in young stallions from 2 to 4 and becomes gradually more intense (superficial wounds). Young mares rarely play once they have their first foal. Adult stallions play with their sons and other young stallions outside the breeding season. Function is training for dominance fights.
Dominance Bite threats, bites, Kick threats, kicks Attack and chase	Ear position flat against neck. Head or rump movement directed against the recipient. Attack often follows unsuccessful bite or kick threat.	Begins in first week of life. Adult dominance hierarchy is usually based on age and arrival in the group for mares. Adult stallions are dominant over adult mares, with the exception of alpha mare. Function is priority of access to water, food and social partner. For stallions, their mother's rank is correlated with their own rank. In herds, there is dominance hierarchy between families.

Small Changes Can Create Big Positive Results!

Great Horsemanship is about responding not to the horse's behavior, but rather to the reason for that horse's behavior. It's about using psychology, clear communication and body language. It's neither about force nor about punishment. When you're willing to understand what's important to horses, you will change how you behave with your horse. As a master of reading your intention, your horse will see the change in how you are behaving. This will cause your horse to think differently about you. When that happens, you get a clean slate! Here are a few things you can do today that will help your horse think of you more as an interesting herdmate.

Be creative, and do some things differently. Don't do whatever you usually do, or do it in a different order from how you usually do. This will capture your horse's attention and curiosity, blow your horse's mind, and shift your horse's thinking! Here are a few ideas to get your creativity going:

- If your horse is in a stall or small paddock, go to the door or gate, and just stand outside until your horse looks at you, then walk away for a few minutes. Return a few minutes later and repeat, instead of going right in and catching your horse. Then catch your horse as usual, spend a few minutes grazing, and then go put your horse away. See what happens. Is your horse behaving differently?
- Tack up as usual, graze for 20 minutes, un-tack, and put your horse away. Wait at least 20 minutes and repeat. Return 20 minutes later and ride as usual, noticing any difference in your thinking or in your horse's attitude. Make time to graze on the way back to put your horse away.
- Allow your horse to see you visiting other horses for a while before you go get your horse.
- When saddling, wait patiently for the horse to exhale before tightening the cinch or girth, one hole (or 2 inches) at a time.
- When telling your horse "that was good," always rub. Never slap.
- Are you in the same mood all the time? Don't assume that your horse will be.
- Hold your lead rope safely, at least 3 feet from the snap. Horses appreciate this, and your horse's behavior can change just from this one little thing.
- Groom your horse at liberty (not tied), allowing the horse to show you where he or she wants to be groomed. Do you know your horse's favorite scratchy spots?

Have fun, stay fascinated, and remember: because this is your experiment, it's impossible to do it wrong! You can give yourself (or your horse) a Do-Over!

Now, it's time to make your notes and answer the questions on the next page of this book. You'll find some inspiration there.

Time to make notes about where you are now and where you could really go:

- ❖ **List three things you like, enjoy, or admire about your horse.**
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- ❖ **List two things about yourself that you believe may be preventing you from reaching your goals with your horse.**
 - 1.
 - 2.

- ❖ **If you had 48 hours without any responsibilities other than to spend two days with your horse, what would you wish to do?**

It is my most sincere wish that the information and inspiration in this e-book helps you to feel more empowered with your horse. Remember, Horsemanship is a self-discovery course that you and your horse will share together. You really are exactly where you should be in your journey.

P.S.- You can find more inspiration, cutting-edge information, videos, ideas, and support on the Equine Epiphany Facebook page, and website. Stop by any time! Let me know if I can help. Feel free to pop me an e-mail.

Cheers,



Maggie Johnson

www.EquineEpiphany.net

Maggie@EquineEpiphany.net