

In general, equine therapy programs are highly successful and run by loving, compassionate people who are doing some of the most incredible work for humanity on an individual basis. I honor every person who chooses such a path and strives to do good in the world every day. These people often make tremendous sacrifices in their own lives, which is something to be greatly admired. Further, the horses who choose this path are tremendously loving souls, and I am significantly moved by their service and their love for humanity. However, traumatized, starved, abused, and neglected horses should NOT be placed in therapy programs (or lesson programs for that matter) until there is a thorough assessment, treatment and time to heal in every way possible. Moreover, we can ask them, give them a choice, if they wish to serve humanity in this way. Some horses simply do not want to be placed in these situations.

Further, many animals carry deep wounds, both their own and for others, and can be significantly emotionally harmed by our words and actions, especially when they hear the phrase "re-homing" because they can no longer do their job. I experience these truths in marvelous and sometimes horrific ways every day, and the following story is just one example.

Accompanied by the program facilitator, I walked through the breezeway on my way to work with a mustang, and my attention was diverted by an unknown animal who started speaking very anxiously to me.

He shouted, "My back hurts!"

I stop and look around to identify who is speaking. I noticed a draft/QH cross being led out of the barn by a volunteer. His appearance strikes me with his head hung low, the sad look of pain on his face, his lack of energy, and the undeniable fact that he is significantly underweight by about 300+ pounds for his considerable size. I found out later that the volunteer I spoke to previously was on her way to tack up this 26-year-old, exhausted gelding for a ride, as she had done many times before. I asked if there was time to pause and speak with this gelding, and the facilitator agreed. I introduced myself only briefly as he could hardly wait to communicate his needs.

"My back hurts. I need help. Please don't ride me. If you have to, please only ride me for 15 minutes at the most, and PLEASE only let this lady (holding the lead rope) ride me. She is my person here. I love her. She needs me, and I need her."

[Anecdotally, the "lady" in my estimation was about 5' 4" and weighed about 105 lbs.]

I immediately communicated his requests as he stated and that he needed a chiropractic adjustment right away. I also shared that he is in a significant amount of pain, very weak, underweight and required time to heal before beginning therapeutic reconditioning. I also asked, on his behalf, that if they must ride him that it only be at a walk as they were indicating they had been trotting and cantering on him. They readily agreed, and I moved on to the round pen where the "mustang" was waiting. After working successfully with the "mustang" and speaking extensively with the barn staff and volunteers, I left the facility with the plan that I would return soon.

The following week I returned. Unbeknownst to me, much had transpired. I was immediately ushered back to the draft/QH and asked to find out why he had reared, throwing a 250 lb. man to the ground and breaking his shoulder. I was told that the man, a participant in their program, was a 60+-year-old Veteran.

Looking into this broken gelding's eyes, I was immediately reminded of his frantic pleas not to be ridden and his extensive list of requirements if he were to be ridden. I asked if the facilitator and staff recalled his previous requests, and I receive silent, blank stares. At that moment, I was profoundly confused and honestly wondered why I was even there speaking with him again.

by Ginny  
Jablonski



If they did not honor his communication and requests the first time, why would they do it now?

Nevertheless, I resolved that I would be as positive as I could and honor the horse's well-being above all else. I truly hoped that this would be a moment of validation for his previous requests and me as a reliable animal communicator.

Before I could even ask him a question, I heard, "Three strikes, and you're out!"

This statement struck a chord deep in my heart. It was apparent to me that he felt betrayed, and I understood why. He took a chance on me; he believed in me and my ability to share his message and alleviate his suffering. I had failed in his eyes, and his caretakers had failed as well.

My mind swirled with potential questions, all of them equally important, but I first asked why he felt I had failed him twice when I had only communicated with him once before. He indicated that more people rode him than the one person he requested. And despite the initial agreement, they inappropriately made him "work" in his weakened condition. According to him, this involved: trotting and cantering, being ridden longer than 15 minutes multiple times per week, and not being given sufficient time to regain weight and heal.

He further shared, "If they will not listen to you, there is no reason for me to continue to talk to you."

It was clear he did not trust humans, and I was eager to learn more about his story. I asked how he had come into the program, and they shared that they "rescued" him from a man who knew nothing about horses and was feeding one flake of hay morning and night for both him and a companion donkey for more than a year. Before that, he was used as a packhorse on mountain adventures quite consistently.

He exclaimed, "I was rescued under false pretenses! They expect me to work!"

It turned out that everything he said was true and I found myself in a very precarious and delicate position at best. If I wanted to be welcomed back, I would have to walk a very fine line. We once again came to an agreement about his ongoing care; I asked for permission to continue to work with him a couple of times per week doing energy work, reading to him (photo below) and check in with him from time to time.

I returned to the facility a few weeks later, and he refused to communicate with me. I asked two of my friends, who were also animal communicators, to speak with him. He was beside himself, in severe pain and shared that he had previously been working very hard and had suffered abuse. I shared my concerns about him with the staff, offered to adopt him, and I was asked never to return to the facility.

Those of us who refuse to address our own issues, honor our own suffering, find it difficult if not impossible to witness or honor the suffering in others. And those who refuse to recognize animals as sentient, emotional and intelligent beings have forgotten that we are all of ONE consciousness.

In Gratitude,

Ginny Jablonski