

Craig Cameron

Double Horn Ranch—The Making of Great Horses & Horsemen

THE HUMAN FACTOR

I always say a horse is perfect for what he is and that is a horse! Unfortunately and regrettably most so-called horse problems start with and have to do with the human being.

A lot of horse people, most of which are human beings, are taking “horse problems” way too personally. It is my opinion, when horses do the wrong thing, they do not do it to mock or spite us! When it comes to *horse—man—ship* the human being, a horse’s counter-part, is thinking way too much like a human and not enough like a horse. Who is asking who for something in this horsemanship thing anyway? The horse says, “I was just fine until you guys, the superior, two legged, impatient human beings became involved!”

Humans need to better understand how horses think and perceive the world because it is different from the way humans think or perceive the world.

Horse people need to work and study to understand the nature and mechanics of the horse. People are predators and horses are prey. We have predator instincts; the horse has a prey instinct. The two are totally different. If you want to know why horses spook or flinch and sometimes seem overly nervous try taking a swim with a great white shark! Gosh, suddenly the human seems a little jumpy, a little spooky and downright overly nervous. I wonder why? Roles have been changed and suddenly you are the prey. Your instinct to survive becomes sharpened.

Do not let frustration get the better of you when it comes to teaching your horse. The horse did not come into this world knowing what you want or do not want of him. The horse is trying to figure all these things out. “What is that hunk of iron you are putting in my mouth?” “What is that contraption on my back and why is it there?”

The horseman’s job is to be effective in the way he teaches his horse. Effectiveness is what great horsemanship is all about. It is teaching the horse in the way he can understand and being patient enough to give him time to understand is so important. Becoming angry and frustrated will only get in your way. We must all work harder at the task of becoming better teachers of our partner, the horse. Remember teaching is the art of communication. Be patient with yourself and your horse.

I hear many people talk a pretty good game when it comes to horses. They talk about what they know and what the horse should do. I say the horse is a reflection of us in many ways. I prefer to let my horse do the talking, because much of the time the horse seeks the level of the rider whether the level is good or bad! I think I speak for the horse when I say, “You can talk the talk!” but can you, “Walk the walk?” Horsemanship is pure communication. How well can you get the horse to understand? So stop thinking like a human and start thinking like a horse. Learn to speak horse to the horse for it is truly a language.

I say, “Become bilingual and do not let the human factor get in your way!”

—*Craig Cameron*