

Think like a HORSE!



distressed he will become.

For example, start jumping up and down in front of your horse and keep on jumping until he stops being scared. If you think this is going to make your horse worse then you don't understand the psychology of horses! You need to prove to him that he will live through the experience. When he stops, you stop. You'll be amazed at how quickly your horse will learn to read

the way in which WE see the world. "Walk a minute or a mile in your horse's shoes . . ."

We also have to help our horses become more emotionally fit around us! How? By gradually exposing your horse to more and more different experiences and helping him to live through his (to us) irrational fears.

Most of us are conditioned to be wary of startling or disturbing a horse... "no running, don't make any sudden moves or noises!" This is sound advice if your horse has not been helped to become braver around people. But a horse that reacts like this is dangerous in the human environment. He is considered unpredictable by most people, but if you know horses, you'd know his behaviour is entirely predictable. You would also know that you have to help him become more mentally and emotionally fit. This is not the job of a trainer, it's your responsibility as your horse's leader!

So you teach the horse to be more people savvy! And how you do that is by continuing with the stimulus that worries him until he stops being worried. You stop when he stops! Horses learn from comfort and discomfort. If you stop the stimulus while he continues to worry and dance around he will think that this is what he is supposed to do!

Think in terms of desensitizing your horse. Prove to him that there's really nothing to worry about and he will quickly learn to trust you, especially if you remain emotionally calm throughout and you can allow your horse to drift on the lead rope. Let him panic, let him dance around and snort and generally make a fool of himself. RELAX! You know he's safe and if you know it and feel it (and the hole under YOUR tail remains relaxed), eventually he'll relax too! The tighter you hold on and try to stop your horse from moving, the more claustrophobic and

that you are not threatening him. He'll start blinking, twitch his ears and lick his lips! This tells you he's learned something profound that will lead to a change in his behavior.

Horses can read people like books. The challenge for us is to be able to read them and work out what they are telling us in any given moment—is it a safety issue? A comfort issue? Or do they just want to play? The more accurate your diagnosis, the more effective you will be in winning your horse's friendship and respect.

Become conscious of your body language, expression and intention so you can teach your horse to read your actions and intentions and to know whether or not he should be worried. A horse needs a leader...calm, controlled, focused. It's up to us to learn how to become this kind of leader for our horse and even more importantly, how to be his teacher. Then we can teach our horse to become our partner.

So every time your horse gets worried and acting like a horse near a predator, relax your claws, smile with all four cheeks and just wait patiently for him to remember that YOU are the leader in his herd, and if you're not worried, then he doesn't need to be either!

*Want to become a better leader and teacher for YOUR horse? Do you dream of a revolutionary relationship and a true partnership? Call 1800 460 988 (it's a FREE call) during office hours and find out more about how you can learn real horse savvy, with your horse, in your own paddock. By the way Pat and Linda Parelli are holding a two day seminar—For Horse Lovers Only!—at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre on the 10th and 11th March 2007. Call 1800 460 988 for more information or tickets. Where else would you be? **hww***