

HORSEINESE

The language of the "god dog"

"What is a god dog," you may be asking. That was the name Horses received from some of the native peoples of North America. Horseinese, is my own made-up word for the language Horses communicate in. The reason I believe they have their own language is simple: they are too complex not to have a language!

I pose this question: *How is it possible that no matter the human's language, be it French, English, German, Japanese, or Klingon, Horses respond to the same "request"?* Take, for example, a Horse raised in China. The human handler does not speak a word of English, yet when an American tourist rides this Horse, the Horse responds to "gitty up" and "whoa," not to mention responding to vague terms such as "you're so handsome" or "good boy!" or the ever popular "do you want a treat?"

As I see, it the answer is simple. Horses transcend our puny attempt at communication. They have the ability to communicate at a much higher level than we can in that they use all SIX senses to "chat."

Did I just say SIX senses? You bet I did! They have our five: sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell, plus they have ESP. Hang on! Keep reading. I have not lost my mind. Give me a chance to explain. I'm not trying to make Horses out to be supernatural! The ESP Horses have is not a "mind reading" extrasensory perception. It's the ability to use all five "normal" senses and combine that information to mentally "see" the truth.

Humans have the ability to speak one thing while at the same time feeling something totally different. A prime example of this is standing next to an 18-hand draft Horse for the first time and saying, "I'm not intimidated." That may fool other humans, but that big 'ole draft Horse isn't fooled for one second. She's able to "hear" our pulse rate increase, she can "smell" our fear, she can "taste" the extra salt in the air from our perspiration, she can "feel" our timid touch, she can "see" our apprehension. With her ability to instantly tie all this information together her ESP tells her we just lied. We are intimidated. Once a human realizes he or she cannot lie to a Horse, that person is well on their way to learning Horseinese!



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Most people that have been around Horses know to look at the Horse's ears to see the attitude of a Horse. Ears pinned flat are recognized as an aggressive mood, or anger. Ears erect and forward are a sign of compliance or happy. I suggest most humans get so focused on the ears that we are blinded to other communication signals, simply because we do not do as well as we think we can at multitasking.

Ever been behind a person talking on the phone and trying to drive? For the most part, humans really stink at trying to do more than one thing at a time. However, when we deal with Horses we should train ourselves to "see" as much information as the Horse is giving us.

Going back to those pinned ears, what are the other things to look for? What are the nostrils doing? Did the breathing rate change? Are the neck muscles relaxed or taut? Here's a tough one to pick up on for us humans: Is there a brief change of smell? (Most humans in the "civilized" world have almost abandoned their nose and its abilities. I don't mean to get off the trail here but... We exercise our eyes and hearing by straining to see or hear "small" things. We exercise our taste every time we eat new things. We exercise our touch every time we move. But when was the last time you took your nose for a "walk"? Our noses run from time to time but we should take our noses for a walk. If someone hands you something new, you should get in the habit of SMELLING it, as well as seeing, and touching it.)

Back on the trail now. Hopefully, the next time you visit your Horse you will start to learn not to just see the pinned ears, but look for other signs. Once we begin to put all the signs together our Horse is giving we are starting to understand Horseinese. Their language is far more vast than ours and may take us a lifetime just to learn their verbs. I suggest that lifetime learning Horseinese is a lifetime well spent because that is the one Earthly language where lies and mistruths cannot be spoken.

Here is one more example of a Horse trying its best to scream at us. I've seen this played out so many times with different farriers and owners it makes me sick to know the Horse gets in trouble when it's the humans that need a kick in the butt and a lesson in Horseinese.

You've been using the same Farrier for years. He's a nice guy. He treats your Horse with respect, and his prices are fair. Your Horse, however, for the last few visits has been harder to catch and when you do, she hasn't "behaved" very well. She pulls her legs away from the farrier. She doesn't want to pick up her feet, all



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of which are new "behavioral issues." This has you and the farrier scratching your heads. This is where knowing basic Horseinese becomes crucial. What is it your Horse is trying to tell you? In this scenario, the Horse is probably trying to tell you she is uncomfortable with what the farrier has been and is doing. She's not mad at the farrier. She's just not at ease. Maybe his mood has changed because of personal issues, maybe he went to a clinic and has tried a "new and improved" method of hoof care that is not working for your Horse. For a Horse to "just start acting like this" is not a behavioral issue. I believe it's a communication issue.

If you understand the communication from the Horse, maybe instead of getting disappointed with her you can talk to the farrier and find out what he is doing different. If it's a personal problem, talk with him. And if he can't leave his problems at home, it may be time to find a new farrier. If it's a new method of hoof care ask him to go back to the "old way" of working on your Horse. If he's unwilling to do so, you owe it to your "talkative" Horse to find her a new farrier.

I recommend to all of my clients to start learning Horseinese and if they do, then they will be well on their way to a new open honest relationship with their god dogs!!!



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