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Training the Whole Horse®

HorseMAREship™

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My Horse is Afraid of Me

An Arab mare arrived for retraining with a disturbingly common problem of fear and distrust of people. My barn is often the last stop for horses before being sent to auction or euthanized due to dangerous behavior, and this mare was facing the same fate if I failed at connecting and retraining her. The owner of this beautiful horse was grief stricken and disillusioned after bringing her once sweet, trusting mare home from a six month stint with a professional trainer. She now has a dangerous horse that spooks, bolts and is afraid of her owner and people in general. Sadly what happened to this mare is a common problem among horses that I work with - how did this happen to this once trusting mare? The answer - Hegemony.

What is Hegemony? A quick definition is *the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group*ⁱ. The culture of training a horse by use of force, pain and painful devices continues to pervade our TV shows, training videos, horse expos, clinics and even among the natural horsemanship trainers. In my opinion this culture of hegemony has its roots in the belief of “dominate the earth and all its creatures”.

Before the industrial age horses were a main source of transportation, weapons of war, tools for ranching, farming, logging, gambling and sports competition. *Just get the horse*

under control and working was the order of that day based on the additional belief that horses have no feelings, animals don't feel pain etc.ⁱⁱ Today in some cultures horses are still used in many ways as tools, but mainly horses are used for sport and personal gratification. However, people within the horse industry and the public at large are questioning whether it takes force and pain to train a horse as the hegemony stronghold begins to unravel.

The Arab mare had been the victim of our hegemonic culture of horse training unnecessarily! Instead of approaching the mare with gentleness, respect and compassionate herd leadership, she was given the choice of "do it or else you will feel the lash" methodology. The mare could not emotionally nor physically cope with the either/or methodology, therefore became afraid that ALL humans will inflict pain invoking her flight response. In this case I understood the mare's fear and allowed her to step out of her stall into the paddock whenever I entered. She was not displaying disrespect by walking away; she was simply removing herself from the potential of pain which I had to respect and meet with compassion.

In the hegemony culture of horse training a trainer would have run her out of the stall as she stepped in that direction making it the trainer's idea she moved her feet (he who moves the other's feet first is in control). However, with the awareness of her sentient nature and her resulting behavior due to her training experiences, I simply met her with compassion and did not command her feet – instead I gave gentleness and respect by simple touch-retreat that felt good to her with NO pressure! I soon gained her trust that I was not going to hurt her and she willingly cooperated with my requests. Within 30 days I had her running on mountain trails with her tail held high and freedom in her hooves.

Today's knowledge and plethora of examples that horses WILL respect, respond and cooperate when treated with compassionate herd leadership and patience, should be a

prevailing practice among ALL horse trainers. Gentle horse training truly does succeed with patience patience patience, and is well worth the time to have a horse that is excited to see you, respects you, does not fear you and enjoys living their life with fun and adventure alongside you.

For high res pics email Info@MissyWryn.com or call (888) 406-7689.

As an internationally recognized Gentle Horse Trainer and member of the Association of Professional Humane Educators, Missy pioneered the WHOLE horse training methods on the foundation of DO NO HARM. Missy is the producer of the famed, “free for viewing” [Training the Whole Horse](#)[®] and [Starting Under Saddle video series](#) plus founder of DO NO HARM Productions and creator of the [All-In-One Bitless Bridle](#). For more information visit Missy Wryn’s website at MissyWryn.com or call toll free (888) 406-7689

ⁱ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hegemony>

ⁱⁱ <https://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2012/10/04/william-lane-craig-argues-that-animals-cant-feel-pain/>