



The Equine Touch

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Hi Everyone,

“Integrity and Intent” Two of the Equine Touch principles you learn about on the first day of Level One. Just fine sounding words? What do they mean when it comes to your Equine Touch practice with a horse?

In this issue you will read letters from an Equine Touch practitioner and a Level 2 student, both of whom have written of an interesting session with a horse in recent times. Their decisions and actions illustrate Integrity and Intent in application and I hope will bring some clarity for you about the mind-set that informs your Equine Touch approach to a horse.

Take care of yourselves and your horses and ...

Keep in touch.

Janis, Ed

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ANZET NEWS

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“The perfect horse to remind me ... Less is Best”

I wanted to let you know about an ET session I had with a mare recently, that I found interesting. She was my partner’s mare, and I hadn’t had much to do with her. She was in my care for 10 days, and while she was here I was to ‘give her the once over’ with some bodywork. When I approached her initially, she was quite snorty and watchful, and as she was an unknown quantity I didn’t have her tied tight, (or as mine would have been, loose with no halter) but just had her line looped over a handy branch in the tree we were under. When I branded her, she twitched and quivered and ducked away from me. I had been told she was ‘sore and tight’ to ride, and I really wanted to help her.

When I was ready to start the BBB, I got centred, breathed deeply, and started... Well, she just wasn’t interested, and moved and trembled, threatening to pull away. I think back now and realise that I approached this mare with one thing in mind...trying to ‘fix’ her so that I could show my partner how wonderful Equine Touch is! I haven’t had many opportunities to work with his horses so this needed to make a difference! Quite funny now and so easy to see when you take a step back, but at the time, I was a little frustrated. Then one of the little gems of info that you, Janis, passed onto us, popped into my head; instead of proceeding with the BBB I went to the TMJ... I took a mental step back, and after the first set of masseter moves on each side, she lowered her head into my hands and started breathing with me! I completed the TMJ and she was standing with eyes half closed, processing, relaxed and happy.

I looked at her and thought I really don’t want to disturb her now, when we had started the session in such an unbalanced way, and then arrived at such a nice place after only a couple of minutes working together. When I thought about the horse’s owner, I felt a bit deflated as I really hadn’t achieved what I had set out to achieve, and then I had a much nicer thought... This was the perfect horse to remind me that, as we were told many times by yourself and Ivana, there may be times that you can’t complete a whole balance. I slipped her halter off, thinking that we had a better place to start from next time. This mare presented me with a wonderful opportunity to remember how much could be done by listening more softly and actually doing less, and of the need to be really in the moment and present when working with horses, not getting caught up in ego.

Nicole, ET Practitioner, Albury-Wodonga, NSW

What a refreshing insight into yourself and your ET practice for you, Nicole! And, yes, every horse has something to teach us if we remain open to learning. This is a really valuable reflection & self examination.

I am reminded of Jock Ruddock’s writings about finding the neutral space inside yourself and not approaching the horse with your intent way out in front of you! Approach is so very important. Yes, have an intention to help the horse, isn’t that why you put in the effort to learn ET in the first place, to help the horse? So, just as you did here, I urge all ET students & practitioners, to listen to the horse. Find the way you need to be for the horse to accept you & understand your intent to help it, that you are not there to force it to do anything.

Beware of your ego! Be clear on what your intention is. Is your focus on doing a “good, impressive job” in order to convince someone else of the efficacy of ET or your ability as the performer of ET? Or is it simply to be there for the horse, offer ET with integrity and allow the horse to process your gift as it will? Forget about wanting to score a point for ET in the eyes of the human customer (or in this case someone close to you), be present WITH your equine client, the horse, work WITH the horse, don’t do something TO it!

The horses don’t lie. We need to match their integrity with our own. It appears this mare was not ready for your intent and I love that you elected to step back and then offer her something she COULD accept and step away, as you say, leaving the relationship in a “better place”. It is likely she may be more ready to accept you & ET at the next session. Good luck!

Thank you, Nicole, for your email and opportunity to bring this to the attention of other ET students & practitioners. Janis, Ed



Nicole with her horse Sunday at Level 2 back in 2009

Your Say:

Giving and Receiving

Elizabeth Denniss is a Level 2 Equine Touch student from Bridgewater, WA

It's human nature to want to feel good about ourselves, especially when we are giving to others or doing something to help. I wanted to share an encounter I experienced which really got me thinking about giving and receiving.

Elizabeth, with Chief at Tooradin Estate



While in Victoria recently I was privileged to meet up with a special horse called *Chief*. I had briefly met *Chief* twelve months earlier. *Chief* has a checkered and in part unknown history and now lives at Tooradin Estate with Sally Francis and, like many of the horses there, spends his time enjoying simply being a horse and helping with Equine Touch and other training clinics.

We enjoyed a lovely afternoon ride together and when we returned I asked Sally, and *Chief*, if it would be okay to give *Chief* some body work. All parties consented and once unsaddled and lightly brushed down I started the session. I wanted to give *Chief* an ET Basic Body Balance and then address a number of specific areas, however once I started the session I knew that what I wanted actually wasn't what *Chief* wanted.



I stopped the session and went off to get an array of brushes and proceeded to groom him extensively for a considerable period of time. I had the sense that *Chief* is not a horse who has received from pure intent a great deal during his life time. He taught me a lesson about assessing my intent in giving, which was profound. In one level I wanted to give something to *Chief*; on closer analysis I wanted to give it my way! *Chief* gently reminded me that if I consciously choose to give, I need to do so without any selfish underlying motivation, such as doing what made me feel good. Instead I chose to give by doing entirely what made *Chief* feel good, and this particular day it was a long grooming session, a basic body balance and no areas of concern - thank you very much!

Thank you for your contribution, Elizabeth. Another lovely example of really considering the horse rather than just doing what you wanted or thought ought to be done. Janis, Ed

NZ News

Canine Touch at Tauranga, Nth Island, NZ



April, 2013: - The first "socialization" of the dogs at the Canine Touch Level I course at Tauranga, Nth Island (at ET Instructor, Denyse Cambie's place)

Recently I participated in the Canine Touch Level One course instructed by Ivana Ruddock and thoroughly enjoyed every part of it. Ivana is an amazing instructor and her passion shows through in her teaching making it very easy to understand what we are trying to achieve with Canine Touch. It was a great weekend with a variety of different breeds and ages including a gorgeous Toodle, teams of Huskies, a GSP X, two Rottweilers and Ivana's faithful little *Jack*. My Rottweiler puppy was far more interested in playing and thought that was why all the dogs were there, to play with him! I also took my other old boy to work on, he is a Smithfield and approximately 14 years old. Age is getting the better of him and I could tell that even with the small amount I was doing, he was enjoying it. Learning on the different breeds and ages was highly beneficial and it gave us more experience, as we had to learn to adjust our work around the individual dogs. I highly recommend Canine Touch to anyone wanting to give their own dog, or someone else's, a gift.

Hannah

Your Say: Embarking on a fascinating journey with ET at Mardella

Level 1 & 2 Ins: Janis Hobbs

Consulting an Equine Touch practitioner is one of a plethora of options facing the owner of a horse which is exhibiting symptoms of discomfort. When my generally sweet-natured cob gelding started threatening to bite me as I groomed his chest and girth area, it was clear that I needed help, but where best to find it? It was quite by chance that, through a Facebook connection, I heard of Debbie Pollard (Equine Touch Practitioner) and discovered the magic that she could perform with what looked like a series of ridiculously subtle moves of her fingers and thumbs interspersed with short breaks of doing absolutely nothing. (Forgive my dismissive attitude, but I come from a long line of no nonsense, traditional, conventional types. Alternative is definitely *not* my middle name).

To cut a long story short, ever since then I have called on Debbie whenever my pony is sore. She has been most generous with advice and soon began urging me to learn how to treat my own horse. I protested that I do not have good feel or coordination, but she began using words like 'intent' and 'integrity' and assured me that she had started out with a similar view of her own skills.

I now know that it was part of Jock and Ivana Ruddock's mission to teach all owners how to care for their horses through maintaining correct body balance. They would have approved of Debbie's encouragement! I have been introduced to the meaning of Accuracy, Integrity and Intent as applied to this form of equine management. Thanks to Janis Hobbs, I have embarked on what promises to be a challenging but fascinating journey attempting to master the principles, techniques and 'choreography' of the Equine Touch.

On April 12th an enthusiastic group of seven Level 1 students received a warm welcome from Megan, (who so generously opened her Mardella home and property to us), Janis, (our instructor), and Debbie, (her assistant). Janis began with introductions, went on to explain the origins and principles of ET and demonstrated the 'moves'. Following this, we had an opportunity to experiment with the moves on a human partner. Coordinating and correctly using hands, breathing and body movement was tricky... and that was *after* trying to identify the exact area to perform the move and remember the sequence of moves!

In the afternoon we had our first opportunity to apply all of this to a group of long-suffering, very tolerant horses. We worked in pairs. There was an atmosphere of intense concentration and cooperation as students tried to apply what they had learnt, prompting each other with the help of their manual. At the end of the day, everyone went home with homework to do – the manual to re-read and an excellent DVD of Jock Ruddock demonstrating his techniques. A truly exhausting day!

The following day, we were joined by some Level 2 students with interesting insights to share. Janis revisited the work of the previous day and then moved on to new learning. Janis had told us that she came to ET as an already qualified teacher and this was very apparent: she has an excellent understanding of the educational process as well as a good awareness of the emotional responses of her students. The course itself is extremely well structured to promote understanding and facilitate practice. In addition, Janis allows ample opportunity for asking questions, responds clearly and honestly, recaps frequently, and allows for the fact that people have different ways of learning. I found the 3-day course quite demanding and at times I wondered if I would ever get the hang of it all. However, Janis, her helpers and the other students were all very supportive and I had the feeling that 'integrity' and 'intent' were playing a part in our relationships with each other as much as with the horses.

Now it is down to the students to keep reviewing the material and practising to develop their skills and maintain their confidence. Janis impressed upon us that she is always happy to answer questions by email and there are plans for us to gather at Megan's from time to time, with the assistance of Debbie, to review our learning. I am sure all this support will prove invaluable and am looking forward to becoming sufficiently proficient to help my horses and keep them in tip-top health. Thank you to you, Janis, and to everyone else for your help in setting me off on this journey.

Jenny, Level 1— April 2013.

You are most welcome, Jenny. Thanks for your contribution, Janis, Ed

VHT for Family & Friends

Mardella, WA 16 April, 2013 Ins: Janis Hobbs



A handful of the Mardella Level 1 & 2 ET course participants came back for one more day to extend their knowledge of Jock Ruddock's work with VHT* For Family & Friends. Already having a grounding in the theory & basic moves ET students can complete this course in one day. For those new to Jock's work it is a 2-day course. Everyone appreciated the opportunity for lots of practice and completed the day relaxed and with growing confidence.

Student comments:-

"Another awesome course!"

"It gave me a chance to refine my technique from the Equine Touch course and understand more about how the technique feels for a recipient."

"I loved being the guinea pig!"

"I will definitely be encouraging my husband to do this VHT for Family & Friends course!!! Then he can work on me!"

Stay tuned! More VHT for Family & Friends course dates to be announced soon.

* VHT = Vibromuscular Harmonisation Technique, Jock Ruddock's human bodywork from which he developed *The Equine Touch*.

SNAPS

Mellow mood at Mardella

Level 1 & 2 Ins: Janis Hobbs



Sonny drifting off as Jenny performs the TMJ procedure

On day 3, as students were tasked with revising the new procedures they had learned, a beautiful, quiet, focused atmosphere descended upon the whole group. These photos of the horses show how they responded to the students' efforts by "chilling out" with lowered heads, soft eyes, relaxed ears, etc. Job well done!

Here is what students said about Level 1 & 2 Equine Touch course at Mardella, 12-15 April, 2013 :-

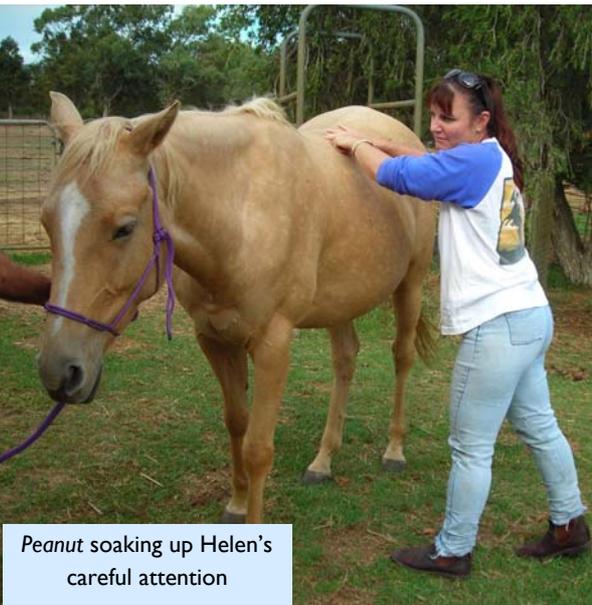
"What I enjoyed most about the course was the opportunity to learn something that is primarily of benefit to the horse rather than concentrating on what 'the horse can do for me'. Also the opportunity to meet local people and network."

"Equine Touch was not what I expected, but it was fantastic to learn the moves and I can see how it will benefit our horses so much. The course was very well presented by Janis Hobbs and the content over 3 days was balanced and a great balance of theory & practical learning. The actions and 'moves' of Equine Touch are the key to helping us help our horses and I'm really glad to have had the opportunity to learn this."

"I am looking forward to being able to perform ET on my own horse so that he can associate something enjoyable to me and not just his usual ET practitioner!"



Jenny & Tracie allow Timmy time to process with a little snooze.



Peanut soaking up Helen's careful attention



Pip's turn for a massive yawn, and only part way through the BBB



ET subjects Jock (Fresian x brumby) and Sonny (TB) looking very mellow after a morning's "work" tutoring the Level 2 students on their last day. →