



POSSIBILITIES FARM
PARTNERING WITH HORSES TO
BRING OUT THE BEST IN HUMANS

Put Down the Unicorn Horn: Discovering Your Authentic Magic

November 13, 2018

Horse Wisdom

All three horses dressed as magical creatures for our first Halloween open house this year. Mere was a superhero, Potato was a wizard, and Paddington was a unicorn. They seemed to enjoy the costumes. They grazed happily, greeted our twenty-five visitors, and posed for pictures. Potato even tried to take his wizard hat back when I took it off.

The next day, I was on my way to Town Hall to pay personal property taxes for the horses. I thought it would be fun for Paddington to pay his own taxes so I invited him to join me. I put on his halter and his unicorn horn, opened the door, and took a step out of the barn. Paddington did not follow me. I turned around, invited him again to join me on an adventure, and took another step. He did not budge. This was highly unusual - right outside the barn door is a yard full of grass that Paddington enjoys on his way to the van. He has never refused to step outside the barn.

When one of the horses does something unexpected, I get very curious and start to speculate about what could explain the uncharacteristic behavior. There was no obvious explanation so after thinking it through for a few minutes and asking him to join me a few more times with the same response, I told Paddington aloud that he did not need to come to Town Hall, but that I thought it would be fun, and asked him to tell me why he didn't want to go. The following message popped into my head. *"I won't wear the horn. I'm Paddington. I am enough just as I am."* Once I took off the horn, Paddington was happy to go.

Human Thinking

As humans, we tend to be uncomfortable with our authentic selves exactly as we are today. We often are focused on self-improvement instead of recognizing our own gifts and strengths. When we do acknowledge a strength, we switch into "despair and compare" mode and discredit the strength by immediately comparing ourselves to someone we perceive as better. Marketers want to sell us "unicorn

horns" of all types but they don't truly make us feel better about ourselves because underneath it we still haven't recognized our own magic.

Looking through the eyes of a horse, we can see ourselves with a fresh perspective. Horses don't care about our history, "faults", "mistakes", title, status, etc. They don't listen to the voice of our inner critic because they don't have one. They see past the limits we put on ourselves straight through to our beauty, strengths and unlimited possibilities.

Hoofbeats to Discover Your Authentic Magic

Imagine looking at yourself like a horse would. It's not as hard as you might think. Many young children have this perspective. Think back. Who did you want to be when you grew up? Consider not just your roles/jobs, but also what kind of a person you wanted to be. What characteristics did you admire in yourself and others? What brought you great joy? Now from the perspective of a child full of wonder, curiosity, and infinite possibility, or through the open eyes of a horse who sees all of you clearly in this moment, consider the following questions. The answers are just for you, but you may wish to record them in a private journal to allow you the opportunity to reflect or expand upon them later.

- 1. What are you most proud of about yourself?** If this question is hard to answer, ask yourself why. What keeps you from being proud? Is it your own inner critic, the voice of someone else, a sense that being proud is wrong in some way, etc. Approach this with curiosity and see what comes up for you.
- 2. What seems easy to you?** The things that come easily to you are part of your authentic magic, but as humans we tend to devalue them because we think they come easily to everyone. They don't.
- 3. What is something you worked hard to accomplish?** Humans sometimes are at their best when they need to rise to an occasion. Consider what inner resources helped you accomplish something difficult.
- 4. Who do you admire and why?** This week tell someone and be specific. Don't just say, "I admire you." Instead, for example, say "I admire your enthusiasm; you always have a positive attitude toward trying new things." You'll be helping them see their authentic magic too. You might think they already recognize it, but they may not. Even the most outwardly successful people can have loud inner critics.
- 5. Write a letter to your young self, congratulating yourself on who you've become.** Include several statements about your positive characteristics, such as "I am kind". If you want to be even more playful, print your full name and include a positive adjective starting with each letter of your name.

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions.

It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.

Martha Graham