

Know Thyself

by Michael Bevilacqua

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Inscription over the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi was 'Know Thyself' - [Greek Thesaurus](#)

The holiday season is upon us. Depending on where one lives, it could literally translate to a vacation getaway to a warmer climate. For me, at the risk of being politically incorrect, it means Christmas.

It is a special time of year that still holds some kind of childhood magic for me. Although what Christmas represents is important, I do not view it in the overall strict religious sense. I became disillusioned in my birth religion as, at the very least, symbols and dates were changed long ago to accommodate other rituals and assimilate people. It has astounded me to what extent history has been rewritten by men in power in order to manipulate and control the people. How do we know what is true anymore? No matter where we come from there is a fundamental truth shared within all our hearts. That is

what counts.

I have personally designated Christmas as a special time, of all other times, for reaching out to others, sharing, appreciation of those around us, compassion, love and with a hope that this will be the year that the animals can talk at midnight!

A lot of people find themselves struggling against an imposed, fixed structure within their lives. Over time they may question what was learned in the way that they were raised. It could be regarding politics, social status, race or religion. It is no different in regard to views about horses.

I believe that love is universal and that lack of it can twist us or deform us inside, in some way. After all, is not that what all comic book villains are based on? Sometimes, fact is stranger than fiction.

There have been stories of people noticing horses unattended in a field and starving. The ongoing situation is eventually mentioned among themselves. Does anyone go to the house of the owner to see if everything is ok? Does anyone take it upon themselves to throw some hay over the fence? People stand by and watch until the horses are near death or some lay dead and only then, call some 'authority'. Of course, there are cases of outright neglect by belligerent owners, but I know of a case described as above where the horses were not tended to because the owner suffered a stroke in the house. No one ever checked. People were stunned; blamed each other but it was too late for a happy ending.

All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing. (Edmund Burke)

It is easy to pass the buck or point the blame but as part of society, we have responsibility for society and we have power to make change and even a simple act or gesture can mean the difference to someone's life. It is responsibility of love and caring, not accusation.

In 'Beyond the Dream Horse', it is mentioned that we have the habit of separating ourselves from all around us – as if we are independent, aloof, better, superior or even invincible. I write of being in the moment; being part of nature and how what we often seek so earnestly in a desired connection to horses we have already experienced when we were children. The results often disappear as we progressively become part of the man-made world, but amazing relationships with horses need not remain in storybooks.

In wanting to work with horses it is imperative that we first work on ourselves. If you can sit quietly and think about how you truly are and what you want with horses, without judging your thoughts but simply being aware of them, this can bring you clarity. What you know, what you like, what you do not like, what you have done, actions you regret, how you wish it may be different... It can put you at peace with yourself and allow you to move forward.

One of the greatest scientific minds of the 20th century had a quite pragmatic view of personal development:

A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive. (Albert Einstein, 1954)

There are many times that, I must admit, my faith in humanity begins to wane. Just at that time, however, there is someone, somewhere who restores it.

In the French edition of Readers Digest, there is an article written by Simon Hemelryk. It is translated to `Dial H For Honesty`. This was a test where 30 cell phones were left in 32 cities around the world. The goal was to see how many of the 30 phones in each city would be returned to the owner.

Number one was Ljubljana, Slovenia where 29 were returned. Toronto, Seoul, Stockholm and Montreal followed with 28, 27, 26 and 25 respectively. Full results can be found at the Readers Digest website (UK). Even the worse results are not too shabby. The English version is available online and the link is provided in the references section at the end of this article.

We are bombarded daily with news and it is compounded due to instant access from around the world. The most sensational news gets out first and is usually the bad news. In our daily lives we offer so much better and it should become more commonplace.

Catherine Scott, of the blogspot, Of Horses and Humanity, once asked me to write what sanctuary means to me. I was surprised what came forth from my thoughts and sent it on. Catherine is direct but thankfully, (or perhaps, graciously) she said that she liked it. This is not everyday writing but can perhaps help give you an idea of what I mean about being truthful with and accepting or changing yourself:

The space within my heart is hushed stillness or silent dialogue
Or filled with despair or love's anguish
Inspiring limitless hope or creating tears so full of emotion lips can only serve to taste them
It is a vastness to be found when all the walls are closing in
Glory and all worldly fortunes have no meaning there
A sanctuary as a castle chamber of cold stone warmed by fire's amber glow
Illuminated by the ever increasing lit number of candles with every life experience
A place of solitude and respite with ghosts of my past and errors lingering in every

corner

Allowing and without judgement

It is a pillow to refresh my tired soul

As people, we all share this deep inside. This has nothing to do with mysticism. This is all regarding a certain way of being which, in turn, allows a way of being with horses. Allow your brain to change your 'mind' and you will notice a change in how horses are around you.

Such advice is not an instant fix, but it is definitely a noticeable one! This is good to help all people begin to find self-clarity and direction. It is honesty with yourself. If you can accept that then you will be less critical with others. This will make you happier and allow you to focus on the better things. That is the first step. I write and talk of being on a 'level playing field' with horses or simply viewing them as different types of 'entities' with whom to connect. Respect is important. It is respect of nature, including horses and this includes yourself.



Humankind has not woven the web of life.

We are but one thread within it.

Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

All things are bound together.

All things connect.

Chief Seattle, 1854

References:

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Albert Einstien: SpaceandMotion.com: [Albert Einstein: God, Religion and Theology](#)

Simon Hemelryk: Readers Digest : [H is For Honesty](#)

Catherine Scott: [ofhorsesandhumanity.blogspot.com](#)

Michael Bevilacqua: Article Series - April 2011: [The Missing Link](#)

Native American Quotes: [Pearls of Wisdom](#)