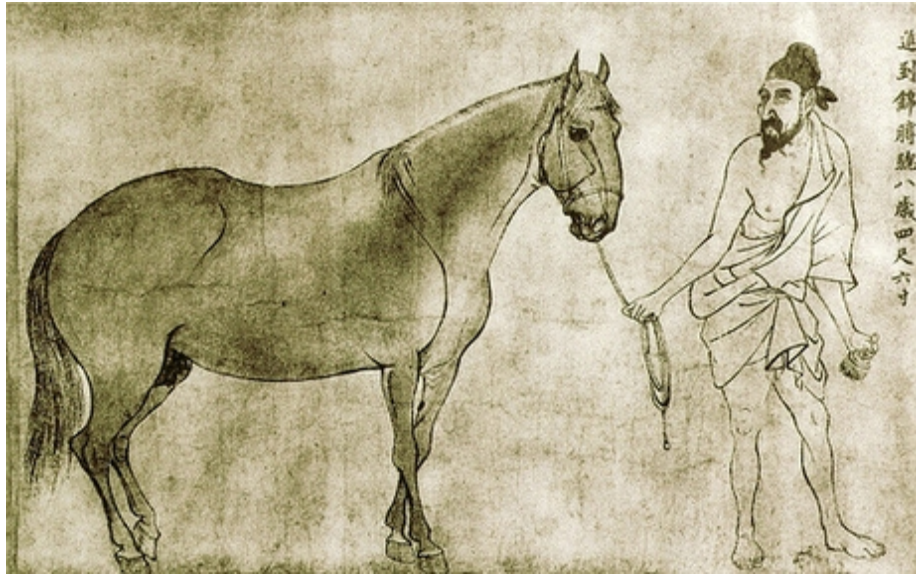


The Future is Now

An Informal Letter

by Michael Bevilacqua

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Li Gonglin (1049–1106) Chinese painter - Northern Song Dynasty

When I completed 'Beyond the Dream Horse' it was a condensed summary of so much information about horses, training, and our own shared search for answers. The story of my progressing realizations only reflects what is already out there or was known by someone, somewhere even before recorded history.

I think it rests on being a matter of time for us to be ready to embrace a certain existing viewpoint. As we get on in years, what we once read a long time ago suddenly has new meaning. Real meaning. Even if it is just a phrase remembered from childhood or a few paragraphs that were written centuries ago.

We have learned practically all there is to know about horses. We may have sometimes been misguided by some of our interpretations but the information is all out there perhaps to be only re-discovered.

I am not referring to traditional training methods but, of course, they still persist. If you were looking for a training method to bring you closer to your horse and, in a nutshell, I said that the best method is no method, that would not make much sense to you. When we want solutions with horses it seems odd that we often walk away from our horses to seek answers from people. It is still important because it can help shorten our journey with guidance, insights and cast clarity on what we may be searching for. However, sometimes it may seem as intangible as trying to explain love. With any animals that have any kind of social structure, if respect is given, then that is usually always reflected back. Such understanding is not only possible with any domesticated horse but perhaps more pronounced and appreciated with wild horses in their own habitat.



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That idea is simple and beautiful, yet, to someone immersed in horse training it may seem ludicrous. The long-held, standard belief is that horses must respect us. However, that notion has nothing to do with respect. It has to do with obedience and submission by the horse.

Over the Rainbow

There have been insights shared by many horse people but emotions are shared by all of us. There is a continuing unity forming, more or less along the same wavelength. I am not so sure that there are drastically alternative methods that exist anymore. They have become so common, wanted and accepted by so many people around the world. They have become more of a standard on their own. It only comes down to a matter of wanting to, or being able to, relate to the message.

As the previous example of the term 'respect', people are now quite discerning. A beautiful relationship or friendship with a horse has no place for any type of domination, physical or psychological. There is still a lot out there that caters to using horses for human ego or entertainment. Yet, the grey areas are fading and people are not fooled anymore by nice words or comparisons to semblances. However, the same message of real inter-species communication, understanding and cooperation can be presented differently. This is all good as long as it is for the benefit and real respect for the horse. Different teachers can express the same message but an 'ah-ha' moment that comes to the surface for one student may be missed by another. We can all help each other understand

and grow. I have seen a seminar participant paraphrase something I said after a question from another. It was wonderful to see how that rephrasing helped someone else understand. How the message is conveyed in various forms is what makes the difference to many different people.



De Pluvinel - L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval, 1629

In the introduction of my book, I mention the importance of following our instincts. If we want to so connect with horses, it is the primitive side that holds the allure and the simplicity. To realize this and not disconnect from part of what we are is not 'savage' but a pure part of the soul. It is part of the basic connection that we can share with horses and a part of us that can be just as noble. Appreciate and adjust to the moment and those moments will build upon each other. In a desire to co-exist or bond, you do not become part of the herd. See things as they are. You become a human accepted by the herd or even a single horse, in mutual respect. I think that is even greater than the common interpretation.

Hindsight is 20/20

I came to many conclusions on my own, thanks to horses. They were far from being brand new, ground-breaking revelations. If someone with similar experience explained it to me, way before that, would I have understood? At any given previous point in time would it have interested me? Would it have suited me with what I wanted from horses at that point? It would all depend on what I was looking for.

Sometimes, we must create or endure mountainous challenges to only later realize how simple things really are. Do not take what you have learned for granted. Accept what makes you feel good and do not worry about the rest. We cannot effectively force change upon ourselves or others. When people enjoy doing what they do, they do not like to be told not to do it. As an example from the book, it was when my plan of trail riding was taken away that I made changes thanks to my first horse. Adjusting to him by removing the bit and initially riding in just a halter allowed me to continue to do what I wanted to do. That small change from tradition, to the horror of many back then, was allowing and not prohibitive. The time for acceptance and change was right for me. Each time something like that happens, it puts us on the threshold of another discovery.



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Understanding horses and nature are not common teachings that we all grow up with. In some cases, it is good that history repeats itself. Through time, something old becomes a wondrous new discovery to someone else.

I repeat myself all the time simply teaching what I have learned. I am realistic to what I am faced with. With all that still exists from the past, ignored in the present and continues to be perpetuated, sometimes it seems futile like going up against a brick wall. I often wonder if it is any use to continue. Sometimes the answers for love, respect and honesty seem so simple and basic that I wonder why I need to teach at all. Then, there are the times that I see a change deep within a horse's eye or out of the blue a note from someone of heartfelt thanks. In the world that we live, this search, this path is not always easy but there are moments when it is very rewarding. When one has caught a glimpse of the beauty, how can you turn away from it? Despite all the answers that are all around us, within ourselves and in plain sight within our horses, we are drawn by

a dot of brilliant, ancient light that continues to shine so brightly within our souls.
So, in the grand scheme of things, as Gandhi once said, be the change that you
want to see in the world.