

A New Year



By Tim Hayes

HAPPY NEW YEAR! It's the time when for a moment everything seems possible. It's the time when the human spirit tells us no matter how well or how poorly we did things in the past we can wipe the slate clean, begin again, do it better. This year we'll be more successful, thinner, eat healthier, be less judgmental, be happier or more grateful.

In this new year all of these wishes are possible but on one condition: we must do some things differently than last year. The reason so many of us have difficulty being successful with diets has nothing to do with the diet. It's usually our lack of effort and commitment to the diet. The same is true when it comes to our riding and horsemanship.

If we keep doing with our horse this year what we were doing last year, we'll keep getting what we were getting last year. That's great if we've been happy with our past results. But if some things have not improved to our liking, maybe we have to try something different.

When it comes to our relationship with our horse, what would we wish for in 2012? To win more shows, improve to the next level in our sport, ride with more confidence, help our horse become less spooky, feel safer on trail rides or simply have more fun. If our horse could talk, what might he or she tell us about their wish for 2012? Wouldn't it be nice if we also knew our horse's wish and could make it come true?



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There is a way to learn what your horse is saying to you and it's found in a method of equine communication called Natural Horsemanship. Horses speak to us with their body language. It's natural for them; it's how they speak to other horses. If we can learn their language and understand what they're saying to us with their behaviors, we will also discover their wishes for 2012.

For those who have heard the term - Natural Horsemanship - but are not quite sure what it is, it's simply a way of creating a positive relationship with your horse which employs this profound method of communicating using body language, touch and feel. It begins on the ground, which is natural for the horse and transfers to the horses back, which is natural for the human. It's the way every breed of horse on the planet communicates whether they're wearing an English saddle, a

Western saddle, going on a trail ride, or competing in Grand Pre-dressage.

We live in a time when we are less aware, conscious or present to our very existence in what we used to consider reality... the natural world. Today, for many of us, reality is going from cell phones, to emails to voicemails to text messages to Facebook, to iPads to Xboxes or flat screen TVs. Our horse's reality however is living in the present mo-

ment. His reality is survival, eating, playing and being comfortable. There's no fear of the future or regrets from the past. When we're with our horse he will know instantaneously if we are giving him 100% of

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our attention. If we don't give it... neither will he.

When we're with our horse are we truly connected to him? Do we know what he's telling us by “listening” to his body language? Do we take the time necessary to create a mutually rewarding relationship before we get on his back? What if we've done everything we know and it still needs improvement. Do we stretch ourselves to try something else even if it requires learning a new or different method?

I believe one-day people will no longer speak of or use the term “Natural Horsemanship.” They will simply say “Horsemanship.”

If you're looking to 2012 to be a year of fulfilling more of your dreams or wishes with your horse, then learning how to understand and communicate with him naturally before you get on his back might be a wonderful place to start. I guarantee your horse would wish for the same thing. © Tim Hayes 2012

Natural Horsemanship articles by Tim Hayes are at:

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