UNBRIDLED SUCCESS

How the secret lives of horses can impact your leadership, teamwork and communication skills

JULIA FELTON
UNBRIDLED SUCCESS

How the secret lives of horses can impact your leadership, teamwork and communication skills
# Contents

Acknowledgements vii

Introduction xi

CHAPTER 1 A New Coaching Paradigm Unbridled 1

- What is Experiential Learning? 4
- Different Types of Experiential Learning 9
- How Experiential Learning Works 12
- The Experiential Learning Cycle 16
- Evolution of Horses Helping People 19
- Why Horses? 21

CHAPTER 2 Leadership Begins With You 29

- Types of Leadership Models 37
- Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders 40
- Horses Always Ask - Who is Leading? 44
- Leadership Lessons from the Ranch 50

CHAPTER 3 Harness Your Authenticity 53

- So what are these masks and how do they come about? 56

CHAPTER 4 Listening To Lead 63

- Horses as Teachers of Body Language 68

CHAPTER 5 Connect To Succeed 75

- Four Components of Connection 81

CHAPTER 6 Trust The Process and Your Intuition 91

- Why We Follow Leaders... 102
- The Trust Mirror 104
- Trust Your Instincts 107
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Herd Dynamics - Do You Know Your Place?</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits of Being in a Team</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Know Your Place in The Herd</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who’s The Boss?</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many leaders is enough in a team</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Have You Built Strong Fences?</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So what are personal boundaries and how do we set and maintain them</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership is a Relationship</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women, Leadership and Relationships</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It’s All About Energy</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Heart’s Electromagnetic Field</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horses as Energy Barometers</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focused Energy</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why Our Energy Vibration Is Important to Business</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of Being - Physiology Affects State</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Be Present To NOW</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measuring Mindfulness</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Seasons of Business</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latent Learning</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantum Management</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dare To Be Different</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Game Training - a new vehicle for a new era</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So how can Horse Assisted Coaching help your business?</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>About the Author</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testimonials</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Herd Dynamics - Do You Know Your Place?

‘If you want to get the best out of someone, you must look for the best that is within them. Leadership develops daily, not in a day.’

John C. Maxwell
There is so much we can learn from horses about teamwork and community. As prey animals horses live in herds to ensure their safety and for companionship. They have a rigid set of rules for how the group operates and this is what maintains the harmony. Every horse has their role in the herd and every horse knows their responsibilities. There is absolute clarity and, as a result, no pointless arguments or internal politics prevail. There is trust between herd members and acceptance of the hierarchy of leadership. Just compare this with society together where the cohesiveness of groups of people – whether they be teams, family units or business entities – are fuelled by fear and mistrust. No wonder then that we can learn much from horses about how to run our businesses and boardrooms more effectively.

So what is a team and why do people, like horses, instinctively want to be part of one? The reason lies in
the fact that none of us want to be alone. Tony Robbins has identified what he calls the six human needs. These consist of:

The six core values work on a type of pull-push system whereby if you get too much of one core value you then go out and seek the opposite core value.

However, before we examine this, let's just look at what the six core needs are as defined by Tony Robbins:

**1. Certainty**
For most people, certainty equals survival. We all need a sense of certainty that we can avoid pain and gain pleasure. Some people try to achieve certainty by trying to control everything around them. It may feel good for the moment, but it’s not good for them and it’s not good for
those around them, nor does it serve the greater good. On the other hand, when you feel good about what you’re doing, that it is good for you and you are in a courageous and faith-filled state; you tend also to do things that serve the greater good. Here’s the paradox though. When a person becomes totally certain, when things are completely predictable, when you satiate this need, you become bored. So while we want certainty, we simultaneously want a certain amount of uncertainty.

2. Uncertainty/Variety

Everyone needs variety, a surprise, a challenge to feel fully alive and to experience fulfillment. With too much certainty we’re bored. Likewise, with too much variety we become extremely fearful and concerned. We need a degree of certainty in our lives to experience the variety. There’s a delicate balance between these two needs that must be struck for us to feel truly fulfilled. Some people choose to get variety, to feel a change in their state or the way they feel, by doing drugs or alcohol. Some people do it by watching movies. Others use stimulating conversation and opportunities to learn.

3. Significance

We all have a need for significance, a sense that we are unique in some way, that we have special purpose and meaning in our lives. Again, we try to meet this need through destructive vehicles –making ourselves unique by, for example,
manufacturing a belief that we’re better than everyone else. Some people become unique by developing extreme problems that set them apart from others. Medical science has now proved that some people have developed the subconscious ability to make themselves ill in order to gain the caring attention of others. Some people develop uniqueness by earning more money, having more toys, going to school and achieving more degrees or by dressing in a unique way, having a certain sense of style. Or we can choose to live a life of extraordinary service. Just remember, we all need to feel unique but, paradoxically, in order to feel unique we have to separate ourselves. If we feel totally unique we feel different and separate and this violates our need for connection and love.

4. Connection and Love

This includes feeling connected with yourself as well as with others with whom you can share your love. To meet this need, you can join a group or a club that has a positive purpose. Some individuals join a gang for negative purposes but they still achieve the feeling of connection. By aligning with your creator, and feeling like you are being guided, you can feel immediate connection. Again, some people become ill in order to feel connected and loved. Some people will steal, do drugs and drink excessive amounts of alcohol to feel a part of a group and a sense of connection. Others will perform at extraordinary levels in order to be accepted, loved or connected.
to a high performance team. A simple thing to remember is, as with all other human needs, if you give consistently that which you wish to receive, you tend to get it back from others.

5. Growth

Growth equals life. On this planet, everything that is alive is either growing or dying. Growth is one of the two primary needs in life. It doesn’t matter how much money you have, how many people acknowledge you, what you’ve achieved in life; unless you feel like you’re growing, you will be unhappy and unfulfilled.

6. Contribution

We all have a deep need to go beyond ourselves and to live a life that serves the greater good. It is in the moments that we do this that we experience true joy and fulfilment. Contributions are not only made to others but contributing to ourselves is a meaningful action as well, for we cannot give to others what we do not have. A balance of contribution to oneself and others, especially unselfish contribution, is the ultimate secret to the joy that so many people wish to have in their lives.

It is this need for significance and connection that drives us to want to become part of a team. As social animals we need to fit in and there is nothing more satisfying than contributing to others and feeling needed. However, if no acknowledgement is received that you are performing well and contributing to the team, then people become
demotivated. People, like horses, need feedback and confirmation that they are doing a good job. Without this feedback, both people and horses become resentful and lose their sense of value. They feel like they are not needed any longer and so lose their sense of being part of the herd. I know from personal experience how this can feel.

When I worked in London I had a great job and externally I had all the trappings of success – a nice car, a lovely house and my horse – and yet invariably I felt isolated and alone. It was a tough place to be being a leader when there was very little feedback on my own performance and this is one of the reasons why many leaders burn out after years of success. They fail to gain the significance they need from the job and therefore fail to acknowledge the contribution they are making to the organisation. It is for this reason that I’m an ardent supporter of providing team members with regular feedback on their performance, focusing on the positive aspects, rather than the negative.

We are witnessing a similar situation occurring in society today. The summer riots in 2011 were, in my opinion, fuelled by a need for significance. Today, many young people feel they have nothing to offer, employment prospects are dire and in many cases the young people’s self-esteem has been worn away by the number of times they have been said ‘No’ to. A UCLA survey from a few years ago reported that the average one-year-old child hears the word ‘No’ more than 400 times a day! And it is estimated that the average child hears the word ‘No’ or ‘Don’t’ over 148,000 times while growing up, compared
with just a few thousand ‘Yes’ messages. Like horses, we all crave companionship and connection with others and, for many young people, rioting and becoming part of a tribe, even just for a night, helped them feel a part of something. It fuelled their need for significance.

It is also perhaps not surprising, given the number of dysfunctional families that exist today as well as the number of people living alone, that social media has become such a powerful phenomenon in our world. Over half the UK population (around 30 million people) are believed to have a Facebook account and globally there are some 750 million registered users of Facebook. Social media provides many people with the ability to feel part of a tribe and also allows people to connect with each other in this somewhat disconnected society. Of course the irony is that the connections formed via social media sites are very shallow and many would argue whether people are really truly connected.

It’s not just children that we need to be conscious of when using the word ‘No’. I have two young horses that came into my care last year, as well as two older horses in my herd. The youngsters are particularly inquisitive; curious to explore, they try and get into everything, much to my frustration at times. It would be so easy to continually tell them off, but I understand how damaging that could be to their spirit and so I go out of my way to provide them with positive reinforcement for the great things they do, like standing still and leading quietly. In fact I remember once asking my equine mentor Carolyn
Resnick why she didn’t do anything when a young colt she was working with started chewing his lead rope. She told me she was ignoring the behaviour, as by saying ‘No’ and reprimanding him she was drawing attention to what she did not want the horse to do. I’m certain this is the same within teams, as people are somehow attracted to do the very things that we don’t want them to do. And if we fail to follow through and address the issue, then we lose credibility and, ultimately, trust as we discussed in a previous chapter.

The other great feature of being part of a team is that it enables us to achieve more. I just love this acronym for TEAM:

T  together
E  everyone
A  achieves
M  more

In ‘The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork’ John C. Maxwell asserts that “One is too small a number to achieve greatness” And if you really think about it, can you recall a time in history when one act of genuine significance was achieved by just one man? On all occasions a team has been involved and so this is why President Lyndon Johnson once famously said, “There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves.”

The importance of teamwork is paramount to any organisation and all good leaders must realise that they cannot be successful without the support of team
members. Johnny Wilkinson might well have been the best rugby fly-half that England has ever seen and indeed, his spectacular drop goal in the final minute that won England the 2003 World Cup is legendary, but Johnny could not have achieved that success without the support of his teammates. Individuals play the game, but teams win championships. The same runs true in business: great leaders play the game but only committed, motivated employees help companies achieve great financial success. Success is a team sport however you look at it.

Benefits of Being in a Team

There are a number of benefits of being in a team and these include:

- **Being in a team involves more people and therefore makes more resources – time, ideas and energy – available than one individual would have**

- **Teams allow a leader to maximise their potential and minimise their weaknesses**

- **Teams provide multiple perspectives on how to reach the goal as each individual will see the problem in a different light. This allows for the creative flow of ideas and stumbling blocks that one person might see can easily be navigated**

- **Teams share the credit for victories and the blame for losses. This fosters genuine humility and authentic communication**

- **Teams keep leaders accountable for the goals**

- **Teams can simply do more than the individual**
So why then do people sometimes want to do things by themselves? Some reasons might include:

- **Ego** – admitting that you can’t do everything. As Andrew Carnegie once declared: “It marks a big step in your development when you come to realise that other people can help you do a better job than you could do alone.”

- **Insecurity** – leaders feel threatened by their team members. By failing to promote teamwork the leader undermines their own potential and erodes the best efforts of the people with whom they work. They would do well to listen to the advice of former US President Woodrow Wilson who said: “We should not only use all the brain we have, but all that we can borrow.”

- **Naiveté** – underestimating the difficulty of achieving big things

- **Temperament** – some people are not very extrovert and it simply does not occur to them to think in terms of working with others. They never think to enlist the support of others; however, ironically, working alone creates huge barriers to their own potential. As Dr Allan Fromm noted: “People have been known to achieve more as a result of working with others than against them.”

However, the harsh reality is that success cannot be achieved alone. Today’s current economic climate has meant that more and more people are setting up their own businesses. At the last count just over four million people in the UK were self-employed and running their own small businesses. What I witness time and time again with my
clients is many of these businesses struggling to succeed. It is estimated that 80% of small businesses fail in their first year and only 20% are still in business after five years. So why is this? It is not because the business owners don’t have great ideas or don’t know what to do; quite simply, what I observe is many people suffering from what I call the Lone Ranger syndrome. They suffer from the isolation of working alone and with no one there to motivate, support, provide feedback and offer accountability. As we have noted, success is a team sport and even the Lone Ranger had his faithful companion, Native American Indian, Tonto, to support him on his journey.

Know Your Place in the Herd

Horses can show us how to work as a team if only we let them. As prey animals, horses have a natural desire for companionship and to be part of a herd. This is their survival mechanism because by being a Lone Ranger out on the plains there is a very high probability that they will come under attack by some predator, maybe in the shape of a mountain lion. Like a small business owner trying to keep aware and on top of all facets of the business, being alone and trying to keep yourself safe from danger 24 hours a day is a daunting task. There is no respite to sleep and rest, because if the horse stops for just one moment and loses awareness of his current environment then he might become some predator’s dinner. Many small business owners that I work with feel the same – devoid
of any support, they feel like they are on a never-ending rollercoaster that they can’t get off, because if they do their business might fail.

Horses learn at birth the importance of the hierarchical structure of the herd. Always prepared for a potential predator, they can run within hours of being born. They instinctively know that their survival depends on listening and following the instructions of their mother and the other leaders of the herd. In moments of danger they realise that there is no time to discuss strategy: “Which way do you think we should run?” or “I think this would be the best way.” These discussions are pointless as unless action is taken now they might be dead, or at least injured. Horses understand the importance of following the leader in times of crisis, and in these instances the lead mare leads from the front, setting the direction that the herd will take to escape danger. The lead mare adopts Leadership Position One that we discussed in Chapter Two.

Talent Dynamics is a great way for leaders to understand how their team members fit into the herd. Talent Dynamics is based on the ancient Chinese philosophy I Ching and it helps people and organisations get into and stay in flow (ie be aligned and congruent) based on their unique profile. We all have unique gifts – strengths – that we bring to the world and for individuals and organisations to prosper it makes sense to have people in the roles where they can utilise these strengths most effectively.
As the diagram above shows there are eight different profiles and each profile contributes to the business best in a certain way. Just imagine being a Star (who is great at marketing and improving the brand) in the role of a Lord (who is great at managing cashflow). Immediately you can see the disconnect as everyone’s strengths are not being optimised. When this happens team members get disgruntled and the business gets into conflict. Trust and flow is lost as people don’t feel valued in the herd as they are unable to contribute. However, align people in the best roles for them and the organisation and business flows as there is harmony and unity in the team.
Who’s the Boss?

So how do horses decide who will become the leader? Well, just like people each horse has its own personality. Some horses like to be leaders – they want to take charge of the situation. Others are happy to be part of the herd and play a submissive role, just keeping a low profile and doing their thing. Others are more dominant in nature; they might profess to want the leadership role but in reality they lack the character to assume this position. What is interesting to observe is that typically when a new horse is integrated into an existing herd of horses, the new horse will allow the other horses to lead it from behind. By this I mean that the new horse allows the other horses to move him around. This act indicates to the existing herd members that the new horse is willing to be compliant and does not want to upset the hierarchy. The new horse recognises that he needs to join the herd at the bottom of the pecking order, because the desire to be included and accepted into the herd is so strong. Just like a little child going to a new school, or an employee joining a new company, our initial desire is to be accepted and to experience love and connection. We do not want to upset the apple cart on Day One and get excluded. Does that mean that the new horse will stay at the bottom of the pecking order? No, he will find ways over the upcoming days and weeks to earn his right to move up the ranks, much like employees do in new teams.

This concept was illustrated so well to me by an Arabian horse called Red Line of Fire who I looked after at the
Epona Horse Rescue in Colorado. Red had been saved from slaughter and, having spent six months rehabilitating him, it was time for him to move on to a new home. We found a lovely home for him about 20 miles away with Heidi, an experienced trainer and breeder. It was a lovely autumnal day when we delivered Red to his new home. With rolling pastures and loads of lush green grass I knew that he would be very happy there. After his abusive start in life Red was not the most sociable horse so we decided to help boost his self-confidence by letting him join a herd of six-month-old foals. Once we let him into the pasture with the new herd it was incredible to see this ten-year-old horse allowing himself to be pushed around by young foals. Red’s need for acceptance far outweighed his desire to lead in that moment and so he complied. It was actually quite funny watching him acquiesce to the foals. Did he stay in this role for long? No, he soon set boundaries and claimed his position as the leader of the group, and in fact the foals were happy to allow him this role.

During the Unbridled Success retreats that I run I invariably get my clients to stand and observe a herd of horses and then share with me who they think is the leader of the group. At one such retreat we were running in Sweden my co-facilitator brought six horses into the arena. I had never met these horses before and it was fascinating to see what ensued and, more importantly, what the clients saw. Five of the horses engaged in high play antics, charging around the arena bucking, squealing and biting each other while one just stood back quietly and observed what was happening. Within the group there were horses
of all shapes and sizes, including one very impressive large bay horse called Qurino. He had a big personality and you could not help but be awestruck by his presence – both physically and emotionally he stood out from the crowd. After twenty minutes of observing these horses we asked the clients which horse they were attracted to and why, and also who they thought was the leader of the group. It was interesting that many of the clients were drawn to the large bay horse and many people felt he was the leader because of the charisma and presence he exuded. We then asked the clients, “Imagine you are part of this herd, who would you like to negotiate your salary increase with?” That made the clients stop in their tracks and in fact no one wanted to negotiate a salary increase with the big bay horse. Why? He was intimidating and, in fact, a bully. He used his size to get what he wanted but there was little or no consideration for the other herd members. He was not a team player and therefore not the leader of the group. The actual leader of the group was a small dun-coloured horse called Scooter who just stood back quietly and observed. From this position he could clearly see everything that was happening around him and take the appropriate action when needed. He did not get involved in the herd antics but rather let the herd sort things out themselves; he trusted them and only stepped into the fray when necessary. This horse was adopting Leadership Position Three, setting the course and then letting the others get on with whatever they needed to do to make it happen.

Today, many horses are kept in domestic situations and so the natural hierarchical structure that occurs
in the wild becomes interrupted. I witnessed this last year with my two horses Toby and Charlie. For about four years now Toby and Charlie have lived together, sometimes alone and sometimes as part of a larger herd – it just depends on the situation that we find ourselves in. My own preference is for my horses to be part of a large herd but that is not always possible. So on this occasion Toby and Charlie had been together for about six months when two new horses came into the yard where they were stabled. Always wanting my horses to be part of a larger group we decided to put the two new horses, Tom and Spot, in the pasture next to Toby and Charlie so they could get to know each other over the fence before integrating them. Both Toby and Charlie are quite placid horses and I felt sure that everything would be fine. I expected a bit of squealing over the fence as the horses introduced themselves to each other but not much more. Well, nothing could have prepared me for what happened that day and for many more days to come. Initially Toby and Charlie went and met Tom and Spot and all was well, but then Toby became very insecure. Worried that Charlie would no longer be his friend, he proceeded to herd him to the far side of the field and for over a week kept Charlie in a small corner of the field, far away from Tom and Spot. It was incredible the energy that Toby had to expend keeping Charlie in that small space. I was exhausted just watching it and judging by how much Toby slept when he came into his stable every night, it took a lot out of him too. Was Toby being a good leader? No, he wasn’t and in my view he was actually being a bully and being very dominant with Charlie, but
in the absence of another leader Toby felt it was his duty to step up to the mark and become one. The problem was that he lacked the skills and character to do it. His personality meant that he was not a natural leader. I’m sure you will be pleased to learn that since this incident Toby and Charlie are now in a larger herd with my two fillies Bracken and Thistle and my friend’s horses Pilot and Tanner. The change in Toby has been profound; he is now much more comfortable, relaxed and happy as he has found his place in the herd.

Toby’s predicament led me to think about companies that I have worked in and leaders I have observed and I’m convinced that, like Toby, some people are promoted to leadership roles who don’t really want them. They seek to do a good job, but because the role is incongruent with their abilities they often don’t succeed. However, put them in the right place in the team and give them the right role and they flourish and succeed. John C. Maxwell describes this as ‘The Law of Niche’; it is the role/niche that someone has where they add most value to the team. In 2003 Johnny Wilkinson’s role was that of fly-half for the English rugby team. What would have happened if Sir Clive Woodward, the then England coach, had asked Johnny to play hooker for the important World Cup Final against Australia? He would have been out of position and unable to shine and morale would have dipped in the team as they would not have been playing to their capability. The team would have become resentful, realising that they were not living up to their potential and Steve Thompson, the hooker, would have become despondent that his skills were not being utilised. The team would have lost confidence and the
competition, in this case Australia, would have been well placed to benefit from the chaos that ensued. And yet too often I see this happening in companies – people placed in roles they are ill-quipped to handle and the effect on the team can be immense.

I remember this situation all too well. It was spring 2004 when I was working in London and leading a very specialised hotels and leisure team. We were in the process of recruiting some new analysts for the team and we had shortlisted a couple of candidates. Having conducted final interviews I sat with my colleague Lorna and discussed the merits of each candidate with a view to making our final decision. One of the candidates had some great skills that were lacking in the team but we were both concerned about whether they would be a good fit in both the team and the company culture. This particular individual was somewhat quirky and extrovert which was at odds with the very staid, professional culture and values of the company. The other candidate was less experienced but culturally a better fit with our team. We deliberated long and hard and, despite both of us having some concerns, we offered the job to the ‘quirky’ character. The candidate had only been in place a few weeks when we realised the tragic mistake we had made. We had both failed to listen to our gut instinct and now we had a major challenge. This new employee simply did not fit in; he was in the wrong position in the wrong company. The teen-style pop posters in his cubicle (the small work area each person had) were completely at odds with the other team members, and then it transpired that his work ethic was also not aligned with the company
values. Yet, despite this, I insisted that we continue to mentor and develop this person and give them the benefit of the doubt – I felt I was doing the right thing. It took many months for me to see the demoralising effect that this team member was having on the others in the team. As productivity and morale within the group fell, I was forced into action for fear of the existing team members leaving. It was a humbling time - acknowledging my mistake and then taking action to rectify it. That team member was eventually counselled out of the job and harmony was restored, but it was tough lesson for me on the importance of getting the right people in the right roles.

This story clearly illustrates how having the right people in the right roles is essential to a team’s success and how the dynamics of a team can change according to the placement of people:

- **Regression** – having the wrong person in the wrong place
- **Frustration** – having the wrong person in the right place
- **Confusion** – having the right person in the wrong place
- **Progression** – having the right person in the right place
- **Multiplication** – having the right people in the right places

It does not matter what kind of team or herd you are dealing with; the principles are the same. All players have a place
where they add the most value and when each person does the job that is best for them, everybody wins. David Ogilvy summed this up well when he said, “A well-run restaurant is like a winning baseball team. It makes the most of every crew member’s talent and takes advantage of every split-second opportunity to speed up service.”

The other thing that I learned from this experience is that attitude is catching. I had never realised before what a damning effect the bad attitude of one team member could have on the entire team. It is what John C. Maxwell calls ‘The Law of the Bad Apple.’ Whilst it is true that a good attitude among team members does not guarantee success, a bad attitude guarantees its failure and, if left alone and unaddressed, that bad attitude will cause dissension, resentment, combativeness and division within the team. Like a rotten apple in a basket of fresh green apples it will eventually infect all the good apples, turning them rotten. It is therefore imperative that a leader addresses the bad attitude at the earliest opportunity or else the effect, as I found out, can be damaging beyond belief.

Horses understand the importance of having a good attitude to maintain harmony in the herd. What you will observe is that if a horse gets out of line and fails to abide by the rules, they are chased out of the herd. The bad apple is ejected. The leader acts decisively to make this happen and the offending horse is kept on the fringes of the herd until it is repentant and invited back into the fold. If we recall that the one thing that a horse hates more than anything is being alone – it is simply not safe – then this punishment is very fitting. Once the ‘bad’ horse has realised the error of
his ways he is invited back into the herd and, rest assured, he will return with a much improved attitude.

Perhaps the most decisive act of removing a bad apple or weak link from the herd I have ever seen was in a documentary by Ginger Kathrens that followed Cloud, a wild stallion, and his herd in the Rocky Mountains of Montana. As I recall, it was spring and a number of the mares in the herd were giving birth to new foals. It transpired that one particular foal was born with some defects and he was unable to get up and join the herd. The inability of the young foal to move with the herd potentially put the entire herd at risk of attack from predators, so the stallion, the male leader of the group, killed the foal. As harrowing as it was to watch this scene it reminded me of how sometimes leaders have to make tough decisions for the good of the team.

How many leaders is enough in a team

Typically in the wild a herd of horses is led by two leaders: the lead mare, who positions herself at the front of the herd, and her counterpart, the resident stallion, who positions himself at the rear. The lead mare and stallion work in tandem to keep the herd organised and safe; one does not lead over the other but rather they co-ordinate within their respective roles. The stallion’s main role is that of protector, keeping the herd safe from impending danger, whilst the role of the lead mare is to set the direction and decide what to do, where to go and how quickly to move. When chaos erupts the stallion refers to the lead mare in setting the direction of travel, and assumes the role of
sweeper, pushing the entire herd forward. The stallion also keeps the younger horses in check and trains future stallions in the physical prowess they will need to defend their own herds.

What is often overlooked is that the lead mare and stallion rely on some important lieutenants to ensure their success. Often it is one of the other mares that senses danger first and then communicates that to the lead mare who decides what to do. These lieutenants provide the lead mare with feedback on what is happening in the ever-changing environment. They also assist her in the day-to-day running of the herd, making sure that the younger horses are taught acceptable behaviour. Some of the mares, however, prefer to stay on the edge of the herd, looking out for predators – but whatever their position, each horse knows what their role is and how it contributes to the success of the herd. So as we have seen previously, the herd survives and prospers because everyone knows their position. The herd’s success rests on this premise just as the success of any team rests on each team member understanding how they contribute to the overall success of the team.

In her book *Horse Sense for the Leader Within*, Arianna Strozzi states: “Hierarchies exist throughout the animal kingdom in order to support survivability of the species as a whole. It is a basic requirement for effective co-ordination.” Whilst we can clearly identify the hierarchies that exist within horse herds, human hierarchies are often more difficult to discern. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that in the human world we often assume that in a
hierarchy only one person has the power. I believe that this is a false presumption to make as in reality, a good leader cannot be successful without the support of others, just like the lead mare needs the support of her lieutenants. Perhaps the main difference, however, lies in the fact that within a horse herd leadership is never a given. The lead mare’s and stallion’s positions are continually reassessed by the other herd members and if they fail to meet up, they are challenged. The fact that the leadership positions are continually under threat ensures that the lead mare and stallion never get rusty, but continually seek to develop better leadership skills. The feedback from other herd members helps keep them operating at their optimum level and ensures that they don’t become lazy or complacent and thus miss something significant that could put the entire herd in jeopardy. I wonder what would happen to companies if the leaders knew that their position was always being evaluated and that they could be usurped at any moment? Would it have stopped the fat cat crisis and financial meltdown that we have just experienced?

In Chapter Four we discussed how communication was essential to the lifeblood of any organisation and therefore it follows that if there is good communication between team members then productivity will increase and people will feel more valued and motivated. They will become more connected to the organisation they are working for. Communication creates interaction and it is this interaction that creates results. Perhaps the most extreme example of how communication can turn around an organisation was demonstrated by Gordon Bethune who changed the fortunes of Continental Airlines. When
Bethume joined the company in 1994 it was a mess; it had gone through bankruptcy twice and had ten leaders in as many years. The company had not made a profit in a decade and flight schedules were erratic. It was reported that the company had three times as many complaints as any other airline. There was massive distrust within the company and a massive lack of co-operation between teams. Bethume set about changing the culture of the organisation and whilst this did not happen overnight, his policy of engaging with team members and sharing his plans for the company’s turnaround and his accessibility to employees to answer any questions they had, contributed massively to getting people back on track. Employees begun to trust their leader for the first time in decades and as a result the company turned round from posting a loss of US$204 million in 1994 to generating a profit of US$202 million in 1995.

What Bethume’s approach clearly demonstrates is that team success is dependent on the quality of leadership. Would General Electric (GE) have gained the respect of the corporate world without Jack Welch? Would the US have sealed victory in the Gulf War without the leadership of Generals Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell? Whatever team you are part of, its success is dependent on the leadership. So whether you are leading a company of thousands of employees, or a team of just ten people, or even seeking to be a leader for your horse or your own life, the outcome of that relationship will be due in large part to your leadership capability.
Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats

Connecting to success and becoming a leader of your own life is always a team sport and horses are masterful teachers in this journey. So start taking action and move your life forward with some of the amazing resources I have to offer.

Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats

The *Unbridled Success* Programmes and Retreats are for people just like you – people who are seeking to make a transformation in their lives and become more empowered through becoming better leaders. All the programmes and retreats form part of a safe, unique and truly memorable coaching experience. There is no riding as all the Horse Assisted Coaching sessions are carried out on the ground and it doesn’t matter whether you have any horse experience or not. The opportunity for a breakthrough, whether in your business or personal life, is profound.
Whatever exercise you are engaging in with the horse, you are sure to get 100% unbiased instant feedback which is hard to ignore. The horses sense whether you are congruent and aligned in heart, body and spirit and so have an innate ability to see deep into your soul and challenge those beliefs and false self-images that our ego puts up to protect us.

Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats focus on a number of key business and personal development areas including:

- **Leadership Begins with You**
- **Harnessing Authenticity**
- **Effective Communication**
- **Listening to Lead and Connecting to Success**
- **Developing Trust and Intuition**
- **Team Dynamics for Results**
- **Personal Influence and Power**
- **Maintaining Personal Boundaries**
- **Building Positive Relationships**

Coaching programmes are offered in Yorkshire, UK and across the world for:

- **Private 1:1 retreats**
- **Private groups**
- **Corporate retreats**
- **Team building**

Visit [www.businesshorsepower.com](http://www.businesshorsepower.com) for more information about creating a dramatic improvement in your business and life through increased focus, purpose and an ability to take action.
JULIA FELTON is passionate about helping people transform so that they can be empowered to lead the life they desire. By unleashing their own powerful potential, individuals and teams can get into flow so that they can make more money and experience success without the stress. Her innovative coaching and development programmes for individuals, teams and organisations are committed to creating positive transformation and getting outstanding results through creating greater trust and flow.

By connecting to and acknowledging their unique natural strengths individuals, teams and organisations are able to become more motivated, productivity increases and organisational results improve. Collaboration reigns and competition is banished as teams work together with a singular purpose.
Julia’s extensive corporate experience includes building businesses and teams from the ground up. During her 12 year career at Andersen and Deloitte she was responsible for developing a business from an idea on a piece of paper to creating and the building a million pound business unit that became firmly established as the global market leader in its niche. Her unique ability to work at both a strategic and tactical level means that she is sought after as a high performance consultant, mentor and coach.

Julia holds a degree in Hospitality Management and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and a Fellow of the British Association of Hospitality Accountants. She is also a qualified NLP practitioner and coach. She is also a Talent Dynamics Performance Consultant.

Julia’s passion is horses and as a natural horsemanship coach and a Licensed HorseDream Partner she often incorporates sessions working with the horses into her Unbridled Success leadership and team working programmes.

Julia is an accomplished speaker and the author of Unbridled Success – How the Secret Lives of Horses can Impact your Leadership, Teamwork and Communication skills.

http://www.facebook.com/julia.m.felton
http://www.twitter.com/Julia_felton
http://uk.linkedin.com/in/juliafelton
In *Unbridled Success* Julia Felton shares the profound life and business lessons that horses have taught her. Through her candid story telling she provides insights into how horses can help us become more self-aware and connected to ourselves and others. The result is improved leadership skills, both of ourself and others, as she reveals that leadership is an earned position based on trust and respect. This provides a refreshing departure from the idea that leaders are always the dominant one.

*Unbridled Success* also clearly reveals that Horse Assisted Coaching is not just some fad, but a really profound way for both individuals and teams to engage in experiential “full body” learning. Learning that will never be forgotten and that has a systemic change on individuals and organisations. At a time when training budgets are under pressure investing in innovative programmes that deliver demonstrable and measurable change is a cost effective alternative to traditional classroom learning. The book challenges us to leave our comfort zone and try something new so that we can expand and develop and see things from a new perspective.

**What lessons will you learn from a horse today?**

**All the skills needed to transform your life and business relationships.**

“In *Unbridled Success* Julia Felton has brought together the many strands of her expertise and knowledge and presented them in an insightful and engaging book. If you want to understand Horse Assisted Coaching and the benefits for you, your team or your organisation this is the book for you.”

*David Harris – Founder, Acorns 2 Oaks*

Visit [www.UnbridledSuccess.co.uk](http://www.UnbridledSuccess.co.uk) for more information about creating a dramatic improvement in your business and life.

£14.99 €17.00 $21.99