

# The Path of the Horse



*The more freedom within ourselves, the more freedom the horses have*

A documentary featuring:

Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling

Alexander Nevzorov

Carolyn Resnick

Linda Kohanov

Mark Rashid

Kim McElroy

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

A DOCUMENTARY BY STORMY MAY

# ***The Path of the Horse***

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*Featuring:*

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## **The Path of the Horse**

*Excerpts from the documentary by Stormy May*

### **Stormy May**

I used to be a horse trainer, I used to be a riding instructor until the day I realized that somewhere I had gone off course.

I started to dream, if I could go and meet anyone in the world, who would it be? I looked at the books that inspired me and made a wish list of the authors I wanted to meet. These people broke with tradition and focused more on what we can learn from horses than what we can teach them.

I made a choice to leave behind the life I knew. I sold my ranch to fund this search, bought a video camera and plane tickets and set out to find a different way of doing things.

My first stop was Colorado to meet Mark Rashid

## Mark Rashid

Softness comes from the inside of the horse, or the person, lightness is just on the outside. You can achieve lightness through training, meaning you can get a lot of things done and they look really good, right up until they get into a new situation. We see horses all the time that people will refer to as soft or light and they'll bring them into a new clinic, everything's going fine at home and they bring them into a new situation and everything unravels.

With lightness, the things that are trained into the horse are available when things are going relatively well. With softness, everything is available all the time. The softness that I'm referring to is the feel that the horse has when they're out on the pasture by themselves.

Through training we take all the softness out of the horse and then we spend the rest of our lives trying to put it back in, and it's there, it's still there we just have to look for it and develop it and nurture it and bring it out.

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I don't have a preconceived notion of where I want to go. Then I would be so focused on that that I would miss the flowers on the sides. I think it used to be at one time about what I can do with the horse, but it's not that way for me anymore. There's a certain way that I'm trying to go through my life and over the years, there's been a shift for me in that it isn't about me and the horse, it's about what the horse is bringing to the table that can help me get to where I need to go

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Once our mind is quiet and still and we can see things for what they really are. Then we can start to develop that softness in us and for me it comes from the heart, it doesn't come from the hands, it comes from the heart. It's something that you have to want to do, it's not something that you can achieve through technique. Developing softness comes from a willingness to want to do no harm.

## Stormy May

My next trip was to Southern California to see Carolyn Resnick

## Carolyn Resnick

Horses when they're in captivity are missing out on their activities of being with the herd and it's my desire that we fill those needs for our horses. There's two activities horses share in a herd, and that's sharing space doing nothing and being together doing something, and there has to be a balance, just like in our own life we have to have a balance between meditation and a balance between activity to feel well being. So, if we can give that to our horse, that we are present, and just being around the barn isn't enough, you want to go to the horse and say, "I'm here to be with you."

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Horses get abused because it works so well. If you take a horse and you force a horse he will give in and he will do what he's told. And so that brings an important question up and that is, "Just because we can as human beings, should we?" If we reprimand a horse for something that we wanted him to do that is a self serving act. How to correct that behavior is to understand that when we're on the back of a horse, we're in the horse's home, it's an invitation. When we're in the horse's home, we must be really respectful and follow what is good etiquette and it's not telling the horse how to be.

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What you wanting to do is to make a connection and then understand what it means to stay within the connection and that it's okay to have disagreements with your horse and it's okay to tell your horse what he needs to do for you. The part that is not okay is making your horse do something for you.

That's what freedom is about, it's about experimentation because the thing that's so interesting about horses is that they're the most forgiving animals on the planet. They're young, you can always take a horse, he can be 21 years old and you can change that horse that day to an entirely different, different understanding of life, they're so flexible.

## Stormy May

I found Linda Kohanov at her ranch in the Arizona desert

## Linda Kohanov

I got Rasa, my Arabian mare as a 2 year old because I wanted to train a horse from the ground up who wasn't jaded, who wasn't abused. I had to find ways to be with her and have a fulfilling relationship with her on the ground and not necessarily running her around in small circles or longeing her, so we spent long hours roaming the desert, spending time in the pasture getting to know each other and hanging out together and all of that. So that was really the start of understanding that being with a horse and being fulfilled in a relationship with a horse didn't have to be about riding.

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There are a lot of things that happen when we start to realize what horses need to be healthy emotionally as well as physically and even spiritually. There's a lot of things that human beings have done with horses over the centuries when we thought they were virtual machines or that they didn't have feelings or that they didn't need families and herds and friends to be happy.

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In the past, we've treated our bodies like we would treat an unruly horse, we would rein in our instincts and our emotions and our intuition and mistrust it and treat it like it was not at all a source of wisdom.

Horses just want you to be authentic. If you have some abuse in your background and you have some unresolved grief and anger about it and you start to let that out in a constructive way and begin to really be present with that, they're willing to be present with you. They're not holding on to that in any way because if in the next moment you're authentically happy or authentically peaceful, they're interested in that too

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They've carried us around on their backs for centuries, waiting for us to notice that they aren't here just to help us evolve in terms of mastering nature and moving around the planet. They're actually waiting for us to get to the point where we're ready to evolve to a higher level of consciousness and awareness.

## Stormy May

While I was in Arizona, I also met artist Kim McElroy

## Kim McElroy

I've been fascinated by them from the time I could crawl I think and I played horse as a child as many girls did, some of us on our hands and knees. I can never really say why I began becoming fascinated with them as a child because I didn't have exposure to horses.

It's like they've always been in me, they're a part of my soul and I think when I began doing art was when I could really feel more a kinship with them. They just seem so powerful and free and yet they have such an amazing kinship with humans where they really still themselves and become tamed. I think just being around something that's a mystery, that you can't necessarily speak with or get an answer from until you learn what those answers are through their own body language and their behaviors. Along with that the feelings you get when you're around them and the various subtle modes of communicating with them that you learn.

I'm so glad that that kind of subtlety is becoming something that people are seeking because that's where you truly can get to know the horse. My art is really about that, it's about interacting with something that's not speaking back to you but yet it triggers a lot of emotions in people.

## Stormy May

I met Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling at his farm on the windy little Danish island of Lyø

## Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling

If you are opening the door of the horse stable, the horse is coming, the horse is pushing, the horse is pulling, the horse wants to go to the left, you want to go to the right means that the horse is always giving to this person the idea you're not enough. What is the picture for the person? Finally after weeks, months, or years, "I am not enough, I'm not enough" this is a big danger.

If you start to learn to play guitar, you will learn the first day two or three notes and they sound nice and the next week you can play the first small song and after one year, you're starting to play on a party with friends. Under normal circumstances we have to take care that what we are doing is increasing energy, is increasing trust and is increasing self knowledge in a positive way. In the world of horses this is not the case, in the world of the horses you will realize that frustration and negative feelings are the daily bread people are eating.

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Be strong inside and soft outside, not undecided. I would like you to be strong, clear and soft. Anything else of these movements will kick the horse away from you. You can drag the horse, you can do a lot of things, but the horse from inside will not come. The horse says, "Look how soft we are, look how weak we are, look how weak you are, then I'm coming to you and then I'm there and then I'm opening, I am with you. This is what I can do for you."

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Small, small things. One leaf touched by the sun, one small smell. When we are dying, I promise you, the memories you will have in your last seconds will be about these small things, touching of a skin, one leaf, one moment with your child. It's not the big things you will remember, it's the small things. These small things are added to a fulfilled life or not, not the big things.

## Stormy May

The last person I went to visit lives in St. Petersburg, Russia. His name is Alexander Nevzorov

## Alexander Nevzorov

**W**e did studies together with physiologists, with vets, and forensic scientists on the effect of bits on the horse's mouth. It was found out that the effect of the bits with a jerking force exceeds 300 kilograms per square centimeter, with a typical pull being 80 to 150 kilograms per square centimeter. All of these experiments were documented and signed by the very best Russian experts.

In the past, people didn't know what they were doing. Trainers, professional riders, they would say it's all right, look how big the horse is, you can't hurt her, it's not that painful for her. But actually these devices act on a very small area of the horse's head and it's all wired with nerves which can generate a hell of a lot of pain. Those who want to know about it, they can, but they still keep on doing it, they want to have fun.

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Horses are not aliens, they are exactly as we are in almost every physiological parameter. And also it's quite dangerous to put a horse into some cosmic range of incredible and unseen alien as to put her down to a mere piece of sports equipment. But a close, noble and concerned relationship with any living creature always gives you amazing results.

Everything in life, everything that lives in this world has the same rights for life, for freedom, love, happiness, and the horse gives these possibilities to the human, you only have to hold your hand out. You just have to understand that the secret of relationship with a horse is that you just stop being a creature that is allowed to give somebody pain, to take somebody's life, to give somebody sorrow. You get into a completely different position.

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We know really well that every horse has an amazing personality, that they have intellectual and psychological gifts, that they are clever. As soon as you treat them as conscious creatures, they respond right away. You don't need any talent, special abilities or magic, it's absolutely elementary.

## Stormy May

W oming home, I watched and re-watched the video footage and spent long hours simply being with my horses, allowing the message to sink in more deeply. I found that the beginning of this path was about letting go of what I thought I knew about teaching, training, riding and life. It required an openness, responsibility and willingness to create a better life for the ones we love, even sometimes at the expense of our own pleasures.

In all my travels I saw that the most important journey we can take is to go within and see ourselves for who we really are. The more freedom within ourselves, the more freedom the horses have, and the more we are awake to the source of life. The horses are our reflections.

# **SPECIAL REPORT –**

## **The Truth about backs, language and who we really are**

*By Stormy May*

**W**ith all the talk in "natural horsemanship" circles about learning the horse's language, this aim can never be achieved when it begins and ends with a questionable premise, that a horse enjoys being ridden. In my studies, I have come to the conclusion that horses have learned our language far better and more honestly than we can imagine. This is why all the "new agey" books and teachers are talking about how horses are our mirrors. I'm not talking about horses understanding our spoken language to any great extent, but they are masters at understanding the language that we seem to have forgotten, the language of our actions.

As a veteran horse trainer, one of the things that most surprised me to learn was the science of what goes on in a horse's back when it is subjected to a saddle and rider. Sure, I knew that horses occasionally got sore backs and needed treatment or a better fitting saddle but I certainly didn't understand what goes on each and every time a horse takes someone for a ride.

One of the reasons that some of this information might seem to be "new" is that it wasn't until around 1992 that the "Saddletech" saddle pressure testing pad was developed. These pads, and other similar devices more recently developed, include sensitive sensors that can measure the amount of pressure between horse and saddle. These pressure-sensing technologies lead to a flurry of interesting scientific studies in the equine world. When this information was combined with other studies of mammalian muscle tissue it all suddenly pointed to a huge dilemma. In the *Journal of Veterinary Science* Volume 14 No. 11, 1994, well known veterinarian and saddle fit expert Dr. Joyce Harman reported the results of a study using the Saddletech pad. She wrote:

"For the purposes of this study, saddles with pressures of up to 1.93 psi were graded an excellent fit, between 2.0 and 3.38 psi without persistent pressure points were graded fair and saddles that exceeded 3.4 psi or had persistent pressure points throughout the session were graded poor. These numbers were derived from preliminary data indicating that it was difficult to find an English saddle with pressures below 0.75 psi,

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which is the highest pressure found in the capillary bed. Pressures that exceed 0.75 psi will close down the blood flow in the arterial capillary bed."

So what does it mean if the blood flow is shut down? This is what happens on a small scale when we press on our skin and it turns white, or if we sit in an awkward position for a longer amount of time and we experience our leg or arm "going to sleep". The author, Mary Wanless, writes in her book "For the Good of the Horse", "Perhaps one of the horse's saving graces is that squeezing the blood out of his tissues causes pain for the first ten to fifteen minutes of a ride, and then his back goes numb."

So, until we learn how to levitate saddles, even a saddle with an excellent fit, the best air/foam/wool stuffed panels and an average weight rider, will have pressures which are more than twice what it takes to shut down the blood flow within the muscles. Dr. Harman goes on to state that in studies of canine and human muscles, sustained pressure of only 0.68 psi for over two hours causes significant tissue damage.

It is important to note that the Saddletech sensor pad used in these first studies used sensors developed to evaluate the risks of pressure sores in bedridden humans, and only measured pressures of up to 4 psi. More modern sensor pads, such as the FSA (Force Sensing Array) system developed by Vision Engineering Research Group (VERG Inc.) of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada can record much higher pressures. In one test involving Western saddles with high priced pads, average peak pressures measured between 8.25 and 14 psi. (Wesley, E.D.; McCullough, E.; Eckels, S.; Davis, E.; Article #9329; 2007; "The Horse" magazine).

Pressure sensing pads also have the limitation of only recording pressures at the level of the skin. Saddle pressure is transferred through the muscles to the bony structures underneath (the vertebrae and ribs) and if we could measure the pressure there, it would be significantly greater. Dr. Harman writes that, "There is surgical evidence in human medicine that subcutaneous necrosis [the death of cells] begins closer to the bone before cutaneous redness and ulceration is seen." This means that if we've been around horses long enough to notice white spots or tender swellings in the saddle area, we are only witnessing the end results of a long process of tissue destruction. The longissimus dorsi and trapezius muscles that a rider sits on have been developing since the dawn of the horse, when Eohippus first used them to facilitate movement. Their structure was never created to bear weight in the form of vertical pressure from above, and this remains true even after centuries of selective breeding for "riding" horses.

Other effects of weight on the horse's back include extension (hollowing) of the back, which "may contribute to soft tissue injuries and kissing spines syndrome." (DeCocq, P. et al; Effects of girth, saddle and weight on movements of the horse. Equine Veterinary Journal 36; 2004; 758-763.) Briefly, kissing spines syndrome is when the spinous processes of the vertebrae (the long bony protrusions of the vertebrae which form the structure of the withers and the topline of the back) start to touch each other and will eventually remodel themselves and fuse together in severe cases. "This

condition is clinically significant in jumpers but occurs in all types of horses." (Marks, D.; Medical Management of Back Pain; Vet Clinics of N. America: Equine Practice Vol. 15, No. 1; 1999.) 'Kissing spines,' or impingement of the dorsal spinous processes, occur due to repetitive undulations in jumping horses - basculing, or rounding over a vertical fence, overextending upon landing or stretching out and hollowing the back over a wide oxer can cause this problem. The result is that the individual spinous projections are pushed together tightly. This generally occurs from the end of the withers to the beginning of the loin (10th - 18th thoracic vertebrae). (Nadeau, J.; Preventing Back Pain in Horses; University of Connecticut Dept. of Animal Science Fact Sheet 2006.)

There are a plethora of similarly significant traumas to the back which are either a direct result of the rider on the back, or the indirect result of what the rider asks the horse to do (sliding stops, jumps, etc.) Some examples are: spondylosis, jumpers bump (a prominent tuber sacrale), sacroiliac joint injury, supraspinous ligament injury, dorsal ligament tears, stress fractures of the ilium, and lumbosacral joint injury to name a few. I hope that the reader is starting to get a sense of the risks we subject the horse to with what we consider to be "a normal use of the horse" so that I don't need to go into detail with each injury.

Let's go back now to the first trauma that happens when the horse is saddled, compromised blood flow (ischemia) in the muscles. It is true that muscles have wonderful regenerative properties, and many times pressure sores can heal if infection is avoided and the horse is receiving proper nutrition and time off from more pressure... but what about the pain that was involved in the process? We are all familiar with the sharp pains associated with sensation coming back into a limb that has "fallen asleep" or "gone numb" due to compromised blood supply, but who has experienced the pain of developing pressure sores, even mild ones which itch and hurt even before there are any outwardly visible signs? It is exactly this discomfort that causes us to shift position every few minutes when we are sitting or standing. If we didn't, we would develop pressure sores (also called bedsores) just from the weight of our own bodies on a soft chair or bed. In researching for this article, I was surprised to find that actor Christopher Reeve, originally injured in a riding accident, ultimately died at age 52 as a result of complications from a pressure sore.

A horse, when saddled, has no chance to shift this weight to relieve the discomfort. He probably tries to tell us in other ways, like fidgeting, exhibiting a shortened gait, ears back, swishing tail, trying to rub on the rail, or bucking. These should all be considered signs of a perfectly honest horse trying to relieve pain. The horse who is more dangerous to herself is one who quietly goes on with her work, knowing that the consequences of showing any signs of back pain will be a stronger pain in the mouth, head, ribs, or flanks, probably combined with a longer session under saddle. Horses are masters at learning how to "get along" and most will quickly discover exactly what it takes to survive. A numb back is probably much easier to tolerate than the other ways humans have devised to control horses.

When we subject our horses to these pains for our own pleasures we are breaching something fundamental in our relationship. The fact that many horses tolerate these traumas speaks more about their innate grace and understanding than any proof of our "right" to sit on a horse's back or their enjoyment of this process.

I hope the above already makes it clear that any time we sit on a horse for more than a moment without understanding what's going on underneath us, we are compromising the horse's well being. There are two ways we can be sure that we do not injure a horse. The first is to turn the horse out in a large field and wish her well in a natural herd, and the second is to study the horse's systems so minutely that we can say with authority that what we are doing is not harmful.

Now that the problem with riding has been detailed, let's look at possible solutions. First, we must understand why we want to ride a horse. If the answers include, "it's fun" "I want to compete" or "it's good exercise" then the discussion above will have little or no impact on what you do and the current horse world will give you plenty of support in pursuing your goals. If your answers sound more like, "I love horses" "I want to learn how to have a good relationship with my horse" or even "I think horses might have something to teach me" then it's likely you've already started to look for alternatives to the traditional horse world.

The solution has to begin with the premise that the horse knows her own mind, and in any matter regarding her behavior, she is the authority. Horses don't have a spoken language that we can understand but they do have a language that we can learn. It is a language of physiology and movement. Once we spend enough time letting go of what we think we know about horses, we leave space for "what is" to reveal itself. For example, if a horse starts bucking under saddle, we might think (or have been taught) that it was due to him being "naughty" as if the bucking were comparable to a young boy beating up on a schoolmate, or maybe we think he's getting too much grain, alfalfa, it's too cold, too windy or any number of countless guesses. On the other hand, if we start with the premise that the horse has a perfectly good reason for bucking and it's our job to determine what that is, he will begin leading us on a path. It's a bit like seeing the horse as a living language course. Of course the horse is the master of this language and we are the pupils learning to decipher his movements and attitudes.

Horses see us for who we truly are behind our masks of words and hidden meanings. They become privy to what we try to hide from ourselves and other humans: our frustrations, irritations, dissatisfaction, aggravations, and at the base of it, our fears. In what other area is it socially acceptable to beat an animal, where it is even televised and the sport's greatest heroes are ones who carry whips in their hands and strap spurs to their heels, showing their "mastery" by how invisible they can make these "aids"? The horse learns this language of ours and our capabilities for causing her pain so well that in the hands of an "expert", the threat of these devices is sufficient and the devices themselves no longer need to be used.

In order to start to understand the horse's language and in the process to relearn our own natural language, we must begin with a horse that we are not inflicting any pain on, otherwise all we are learning is about the actions of a horse in pain and then other humans teach us how we can control that through more pain. Truthfully, this makes up the bulk of information that's been studied for the thousands of years that we've been riding horses. It is hard for the typical rider to understand that a real relationship with a horse must begin on the ground with no halters, ropes, or small confined spaces. J. Allen Boone's sentiment about dogs in "A Kinship with all Life" applies equally to horses, "There are facts about dogs, and there are opinions about them. The dogs have the facts and the humans have the opinions. If you want facts about a dog, always get them straight from the dog. If you want opinions, get them from the human."

As a person progresses in their understanding of horse language, with its syntax of anatomy, physiology, and psychology, there may come a time when it is appropriate to get on a horse's back. Just as signposts point the way to a destination, I can give a hint about some of the elements that will need to be understood by the person who has endeavored to learn enough of the horse's language to get to a point where riding might be a helpful step in their lessons.

As each human endeavors to learn the way a horse's body is designed, the way certain muscles, tendons and ligaments work in concert with the skeletal structure, and the capacities and limits of these physiological elements, he will learn ways to "play" with the horse which lead to more freedom and balance for the horse. In the same way that yoga can help balance our own bodies and spirits, the person will learn the yoga which balances and frees a horse to enable her to greater expression.

The next signpost is when the person learns how to work with the horse with greater discipline, where both human and horse apply themselves to specific elements which develop the physiology of the horse and the mental focus and concentration of both horse and human. By this time, another signpost is that the personal desire of the human to ride the horse will have naturally dropped away. A person at this level of understanding would have no more wish to bridle and saddle her equine teacher than she would to bridle and saddle her best human friend and prod her along a nice "trail ride".

If you are at the beginning of this journey and can't quite understand yet how a person could have a fulfilling relationship with a horse without riding, maybe it would be helpful to have a little carrot hung out to tempt you. When a human has learned the horse's language well enough that she begins to dance with her equine partner, she collects and balances him not as the end result of pulling, tugging, and restraining, but as a result of speaking a common language, never causing pain at any point along the path. She simply learns how to direct his movements as a conductor leads an orchestra; only then will the horse's anatomy reveal that he can indeed carry a rider, on a strengthened spine that has not been weakened by hours of a rider pounding on the

saddle, with muscles that are free from painful pressure sores, carried in a flexed and contracted state which leads to higher blood pressure within the muscle and the ability of this muscle to endure the pressure from a rider for a few minutes at a time.

At this point there can be no confusion; when the entire relationship has been built without physical restraints, there can be no doubt in the human's mind that she has achieved something beyond winning or losing, she has gained understanding. In this light, the bad parts of human character drop away.

In the final analysis, when we follow this path we will experience the gift that the horses have been holding for us. They can help us relearn our own ancient language and to live harmoniously with ourselves and the other residents of this planet. I hope in other articles to be able to find the right words to express the fullness of what I'm starting to experience but perhaps I'll have to be content with pointing out signposts.

## **Praise for *The Path of the Horse***

Brilliant!  
**Debbie Sharpe**

I was speechless! I cried for the longest time. Sometimes it's hard to look at what you're doing with your horses and be totally honest. It's a journey of a lifetime. It challenges us to be better people. Horses keep us honest when we listen.

I've followed the work of several of the featured horse people in your video and it was wonderful to see them speak in this venue. I wanted to send a copy to every horse person I know. I long for them to "see". Could they "see"?

*"The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend"*  
Henri L. Bergson.

You are truly a blessing and I can't thank you enough for producing such a beautiful piece of work. Thank you for your sacrifice to make this wonderful film. I believe that your impact on the horse world will be monumental.

Well done!  
**Courtney <http://www.msredshorsecookies.com/>**

Just received it. Just watched it. Wow! Have to take time to digest what I saw. I really "got" this last year, but I think I have wandered off my chosen path more recently. Your video has brought me back to where I want to be. Things happen for a reason and I know the reason this arrived in my mailbox today.....

Many thanks!  
**Cheryl**

The DVD arrived today and I have had my first viewing - I love it and I thank you for putting together such a wonderful piece. I have read, watched, admired etc. all of the amazing people you documented. I smiled, laughed, cried and dreamed.

**Carol Powell**

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I wish to thank you from the depths of my heart for this DVD! I cried with shame at the treatment we have given these and ALL non-humans. I laughed and felt deeply the joy of interaction, unimpeded, between non-human and human. I have the impulse to ask what I can do to help the education of people about all of this.

Love,  
**Sonja**

I am so impressed with *The Path of the Horse* ... it is brilliant and SUCH important work!! CONGRATULATIONS - You are a true trailblazer and incredibly brave. I actually did not know your personal story or how it was woven through all of this and it touches me so deeply that I just bawled and smiled and cheered through the entire thing - it is so incredibly humbling and takes me to a new level of both understanding and not knowing and seeking and surrendering.

**Constance Funk, author of Beauty from Brokenness**

To produce this exceptional documentary, Stormy May 'gave up' her horse training career. She set off on a mission to find better and this video portrays what she learned and experienced on the journey, which will astound the viewer who is new to this kind of horse-human relationship.

This beautifully produced DVD, featuring Stormy and the visionary horsemen and women she interviews (Mark Rashid, Linda Kohanov, Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling, Alexander Nevzorov and Carolyn Resnick), clearly demonstrates how horses do have a gift to share and that the future of horse-human relationships is looking much better.

Footage of what is typical in today's training and treatment of horses is shown in stark contrast to the gentle, elegant and natural ways these folks relate to their horses and do amazing things with them, also shown.

We can be better horse people and The Path of the Horse challenges us to transcend. Thanks to Stormy May and her very impressive work, we have a place to start. This is a must-see, must-share video. Here's hoping its impact on the horse world will spread far and wide fast.

**Natural Horse Magazine, U.S.A.**

## PRAISE FOR THE PATH OF THE HORSE

In this breathtaking documentary, producer Stormy May recounts her unusual search for a more meaningful path of her own.

After years of training horses and riders, she began to see "something lost" in the horse during the process. She sought help from six visionaries, people working in the most innovative ways with horses today and she found more wisdom, evolution and higher consciousness than she could have imagined. The film features Mark Rashid, Carolyn Resnick, Linda Kohanov, Kim McElroy, Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling and Alexander Nevzorov.

All of these equestrians use similar principles, achieving astonishing results by focusing on trust and passive leadership, sharing space without agenda, listening more closely to horse language and spirit and increasing self-understanding, with no coercion or discomfort involved. The possibilities, for both horse and rider, are incredible and may not yet be visible to all

The Path of the Horse, through carrot rather than riding crop, gently encourages average owners to view their equine friend with fresh eyes. The questions touch our hearts. Are threats of pain acceptable in eliciting desired behaviour from any living creature? Will love, praise, affection and friendship produce better results?

The truth may lie in the dramatic sequence of photographs shown towards the end of the film. These startling photos; taken at a Russian Trail Riding Competition, capture the pain and fear expressed by horses being cued, in what we commonly view as acceptable ways, to perform for that ribbon.

Attitudes and practices in the horse-human partnership are shifting. "The next step" requires new patience; flexibility and creativity on the part of the horse owner. The outcomes, so dearly demonstrated in The Path of the Horse, are magnificent and inspiring. Riding communities win find this a provocative film to view and discuss.

Stormy May is a lifelong horsewoman who is able to combine her background in fine art, photography, graphic design and marketing with her passion for the beauty of horses.

**Horses All Magazine, Canada**

**If you haven't already, remember to sign up for The Path of the Horse  
Teleseminar Series featuring the teachers from the documentary at:**

[www.thepathofthehorse.com](http://www.thepathofthehorse.com)