

EXECUTIVE BOOK  
SUMMARY ASSIGNMENT

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Roberts has devoted his life to understanding Equus, the language of the horse. In this book, Roberts applies his wisdom and experience to the ways we relate to each other, work together, provide leadership, interact as families, and so on. Roberts argues that with humans, as with horses, the gentle way is the better way.

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# Horse Sense for People

## The Man Who Listens to Horses Talks to People

MONTY ROBERTS HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS ~ 2000

### Selected Monty Roberts' "Ideas to Live By"

*Many people watch, but few see.*



*Make it easy for him to do right and difficult for him to do wrong.*



*Always work to cause your horse to follow the path of least resistance. Then place an opening for him to pass through so that the path of least resistance becomes the direction you want him to go in.*



*It is not the great trainer who can cause his horse to perform. The great trainer can cause a horse to want to perform.*



*Violence is for the violator, never the victim.*



*There is no such thing as teaching, only learning.*



*Everyone has the right to fail.*



*No guts, no gain.*



*It is a teacher's duty to create an environment in which the student can learn.*



*If he is about to learn, stay out of his way. If all learning is zero through ten, then the most important part of learning is zero through one.*



*Everyone must be responsible for their own actions and the consequences thereof.*



*Keep it simple. Simple is best.*



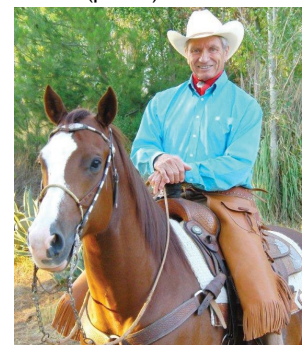
## Who is Monty Roberts? Why Listen?

- known as the "Man Who Listens to Horses"
- an award-winning trainer of champion horses
- best-selling author
- Hollywood stunt man
- foster dad to 47 children (plus 3 of his own)
- creator of the world-renowned and revolutionary equine training technique Join-Up (www.montyroberts.com)

Roberts has been working with horses for more than 60 years and is world-renowned for his skill as a trainer.

In this book, Roberts uses his knowledge of how horses communicate with each other to revolutionize how humans communicate with each other. Above all, Roberts seeks to change the way people live by changing how we treat each other. According to Roberts (2000), "gentleness is the true strength of the world" (p. 209).

Today, Roberts (2000) remains steadfast to his goal, "to leave the world a better place, for horses and people, than I found it" (p. 220).



# Join-Up: The Journey



The horse has an important message for humankind.

As a young boy, Roberts watched wild horses interacting out on the Nevada desert, discovering first-hand the subtleties and intricacies of the equine language. This early knowledge became the basis of his Join-Up technique, which he continues to explore and refine.. "Join-Up is a consistent set of principles using the horse's own language and designed to let the horse know that he has freedom of choice" (Roberts, 2000, p. 2). Nonviolence and trust are essential cornerstones of the process.



*"I have discovered that the horse has many of the same responses and needs as humans; and the horse and human have closer behavioral ties than I had first considered"*

(Roberts, 2000, p. 9).

## How to Achieve Join-Up

Roberts believes the principles of Join-Up are easily transferred to our world. He maintains that creating a relationship based on trust and confidence activates intrinsic motivation so that optimum performance can be achieved.

To achieve Join-Up, Roberts describes a purposeful and orderly interaction with the horse, based on body language and controlled movement within the confines of a round-pen. In simplistic terms,

Roberts sends a horse out with body language, communicating he has the authority to make the horse move. Once the horse reaches its flight distance (distance at which it feels compelled to negotiate its circumstances), Roberts watches for a fairly predictable sequence of body language indicating the horse respects the new leader. By softening his body language Roberts invites the horse into his space to Join-Up. From

this point the horse is rewarded for positive actions, and put to work for negative actions. Since horses are prey animals and humans are predators, trust must often be earned/renewed by working together towards goals. This, Roberts (2000) believes, is the secret of true leadership, "an effective leader must create a situation whereby people choose to stay with him or her rather than go away" (p. 16).

## Join-Up in the Workplace

Although the methods with horses are physical, and with humans they are psychological, Roberts (2000) maintains the results will be the same.

- "First impressions are perhaps the most important messages we convey. There is never a second chance to make a first impression" (p. 17).

- "Create an environment in which change occurs without production loss... an environment in which people are willing to change" (p. 24).
- "Without willingness, work suffers and the whole organization is crippled" (p. 24).
- "Promote the feeling of being a member of the team..."

each position on the team is important if we are to achieve a successful outcome" (p. 25).

### Paradyne Corporate Experience:

Noncoercive environment, allow bucking to occur, expect resistance, keep pulse rate down, establish trust, keep dialogue flowing! (Roberts, 2000).



# Communication

The body language of horses offers profound lessons for communication between humans.

Communication is key, and the importance of nonverbal communication cannot be overlooked. Birdwhistell (1955) estimated nearly two-thirds of the meaning in any social situation is derived from nonverbal cues.

In order of impact, the **Parts of Communication** include body language, tone of voice, and actual words. Roberts further explores body language:

- **Advance & Retreat:** The prey animal's first reaction to danger is flight. Attack averted they will stop, look back, and reassess the situation. This

allows the prey animal (horse) to learn more about the threat and conserve its energy. Humans are not immune to this phenomenon (e.g.: savvy salesman).

- **Eyes on Eyes:** In horses, direct eye contact combined with aggressive body position communicates a predatory gesture. In humans, eye contact signals interest, commitment, and maintains conversation. There are many parallels between horses and individuals with autism (e.g.: Temple Grandin).

- **Distractability:** "the ability to be totally aware of your environment" (Roberts, 2000, p. 50). To survive, horses have evolved to be constantly on their guard. In humans, not necessarily a sign of disinterest or inability to pay attention, distractability might actually signal the ability and talent to focus on many things going on at once.

By understanding the parallels in how horses and other animals (including humans) perceive the world around them we can gain a greater understanding of why people and animals react to situations as they do.

## The Round Pen



Roberts proposes the horse has a natural understanding of the concepts of "herd" and "teamwork"... Do humans?

The Round Pen is a controlled environment that creates the context in which conversation between the horse and trainer takes place. With a clear goal, focus, and/or objective in mind, the trainer asks the horse for responses and reads the horse's signals. "The trainer must always remain objective and should not personalize the horse's responses" (Roberts, 2000, p. 59). According to Roberts, the round pen creates the conditions for an environment in

which the horse learns by choice, and where communication replaces fear with trust and acceptance.

While the round pen can be a catalyst environment for learning and communication, it also serves to draw attention to the necessity of a conducive environment. For humans, the context of a meeting and the distractions of the environment are important considerations in achieving the goal of quality communication.



*"Knowledge cannot be pushed into a brain; it must be willingly drawn into the brain by the recipient"*  
(Roberts, 2000, p. 58).

## Why We Need Join-Up

"Every time you break trust it becomes harder to build it up again" (Roberts, 2000, p. 65).



Roberts believes Join-Up facilitates learning through communication that both parties understand and respect. Join-Up is not only an essential step in making a lasting connection with a horse, it also serves as a metaphor for how humans interact with each other. According to Roberts (2000):

- Mixed signals can destroy confidence.
- Questions are the basis of our communication—they provide direction.

- There can be no partnership where there is domination.
- Be consistent and caring, avoiding emotional blackmail.
- It is nearly almost always possible to regain broken trust if you are willing to change your approach.
- Horses aren't born mean; neither are people.



Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent.  
~ I. Asimov



# Against Violence

In Chapter 3, Roberts (2000) sums up his manta against violence in three principles:

- **Violence is never the answer:** “We human beings cannot solve our problems by acting violently toward any other creature. We use violence in an attempt to answer or respond to our problems, but not until we communicate and negotiate with others in a tranquil and civil manner do we truly gain the solutions we are seeking.”
- **Violence is for the violator and never for the victim:** “Violators act through a sense of frustration. They reach a point at which they feel they are without choices. They go into an aggressive mode and attempt to bash their subject into agreement. If we are in conflict with one another, the most positive results are always obtained if we can agree to enter into negotiations that will ultimately produce solutions to the dilemma.”
- **No one of us was born with the right to say “You must or I’ll hurt you” to any other creature, animal or human:** “This statement outlines my core belief that to force others to comply with our wishes is inhumane and immoral. I do not believe that nature intended for us to act in this manner.” (p. 68)

“We are responsible for our own actions and the consequences of our actions”  
(Roberts, 2000, p. 73).

# Violence in Today’s Society

“Fear is the antecedent of violence; ignorance is the antecedent of fear. Only through communication can we achieve trust and gain knowledge and get on the nonviolent road. In a world where few people have the chance to work closely with the horse, we can at least all share in the message I so firmly believe the horses are telling us: violence is never the answer” (Roberts, 2000, p. 75).

In this chapter Roberts attempts to define violence by describing both what it is, and what it is not.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Lion vs antelope | No—survival of the fittest/act of nature             |
| Verbal abuse     | Yes—indelible scars, (-) effects                     |
| Sports           | No—unless violence for violence’s sake is encouraged |

Roberts (2000) revisits the Columbine High School shootings, frustrated that “as a society we have engineered and very carefully created the environment where this type of destructive behavior is inevitable, where children can kill, and then kill themselves” (p. 71). Roberts believes our society is currently ineffective in its attempts to reduce violence, and that underlying philosophies must be addressed before real change can be realized.

## PB

PB had been purchased off a sales video and was brought to Monty Roberts for training. One of Monty’s trainers started working with the horse, only to end up in the hospital after a vicious kick. Monty picked up the training, and discovered the horse had been severely whip abused. Any quick movement along PB’s left side would result in an explosion of

bucking and kicking. After several sessions, where the remedial horse wavered between trust and Join-Up, and skepticism and refusal, PB eventually started to come around.

PB went on to have a productive career as a professional show jumper. However, the emotional baggage he carries remains just below the surface.

Treated fairly, it is likely PB will be successful and productive; treated with brutality, it is likely he will revert to a dangerous state.

“Once I caused him to believe in me, we made great progress. I long for the day when all horses and people on the earth will be given a fair opportunity without force and demand” (Roberts, 2000, p. 82).





# Trust

Trust is the foundation of Roberts' Join-Up technique. He maintains it is essential in any lasting and productive relationship:

- Trust is paramount to all good relationships and partnerships.
- In a trust-based relationship ground rules are imperative, and all parties are responsible for their actions.

ble for their actions.

- Trust is stimulated by shared interests, it is inspired by willingness and confidence, and it is strengthened through bonding experiences.
- Trust is about questions and answers—a conversation—and you have to listen.

Trust gives me my freedom and my fear takes it away. ~ J. Gibb

- Without trust it is difficult to maintain fidelity.
- People tend to mask their feelings but the truth will surface to ultimately affect the relationship.
- Trust goes both ways.
- We all have our areas of expertise.

Ireland's John Hickey winning the bareback Puissance competition at Oslo, 2011 (2 metres 10).

Roberts challenges companies to find out if their employees trust those around them, as well as those responsible for them. He believes employers should know as much as possible about their employees.

Roberts believes a few sessions in the round pen would help those in leadership positions elevate their understanding of trust. The unfamiliar environment challenges any leader personality type to:

- find a way to communicate and establish a relationship with a potentially frightening or unnerving creature.
- successfully work with the animal towards achieving common goals.

## Trust in the Corporate World

Roberts is of the opinion that such an exercise opens the individual up to trust, and instills a greater tolerance for the concerns and difficulties of one's co-workers, thereby improving relationships in the workplace and beyond.

### Join-Up to reestablish trust:

- "Allowing the horse to choose his own course of action while making him responsible for his own decisions will very quickly set him on a positive track".
- "If nonviolent discipline is necessary and is effected appropriately, the horse will very quickly choose to cooperate".

- "Using the language of Equus allows you to negotiate a contract quite quickly... positive reward for positive actions".
- "You will virtually always gain the desired results in a far shorter period of time than will the trainer who demands performance rather than requesting it". (Roberts, 2000, pp. 93-94)

Consider how this applies to working with people. We must understand where a person is coming from and seek to engage him/her in experiences that grow trust before we can expect any changes in behavior.

There are two elements to consider: **Fear**, which stems from "the unfamiliar", and **Mistrust**, which stems from "the familiar" (Roberts, 2000, p. 87).

# Tina

In the early 1980s Monty Roberts took his mule Tina to a 10,000 acre ranch to assist with a round-up. Monty and another rider were paired up to bring cattle down from the mesas. Each was assigned an area to cover and a meeting spot. Monty and Tina were successful in driving their cattle down, but their partner failed to meet them so the cattle proceeded up the wrong road. Monty and Tina headed them off, bringing them back to the meeting place. However, with still no partner in sight, the cattle moseyed on up the original road they had traveled down. Once again Monty and Tina leapt into action. A third instance and Tina dug her heels in, refusing to continue.

"Find a way to understand and make allowances for the roads each of us ... traveled" (Roberts, 2000, p. 92).

Monty was surprised by her resistance, but when he looked up, he saw his partner finally heading towards them.



**Lessons Learned?** "Corporate executives focusing on the goals they wish to achieve sometimes overlook the obstacles ... seeing only the final result" (Roberts, 2000, p. 98). Orders and performance cannot be demanded without suitable regard for the individuals responsible for actually carrying out the tasks or completing the work. If demands are perceived to be unreasonable or ill-founded, there may very well come a time when the "do-ers" become the "won't-ers".

# Trust continued... Tropicana's Story



*"A little horse sense would go a long way in the workplace"*  
(Roberts, 2000, p. 102)

Since 1986, Roberts has been working with managers and executives of corporations from all over North America. He reports that those who experience the Join-Up process often admit to being greatly moved by witnessing a large, powerful, and unhandled flight animal work past its fear, through indecision, to trust.

Mounting pressure to complete in the global marketplace had caused Tropicana to lay out a 3 year set of goals to be met—or else. As a result,

Tropicana managers went into fear mode, telling the owner that with pressure the first year might be met, but the second was highly improbable, and the third was utterly impossible.

Bob Foxworthy was called in to address the fear in the culture of the corporation. Several strategies were identified:

- (+) environment begins at the ground level and reflects up to and down from management.
- Eliminate fear and its causes and change the culture from "demand and force" to "allow and ask".
- Use the "Trim Tab" metaphor: a large ship's rudder cannot turn the ship without the trim tab (small rudder only 5% of the large rudder). Thus, "you only need 5% of the employees to create change within the company" (Roberts, 2000, p. 104).
- Modify behavior in the individual.
- How we treat each other in the workplace translates to overall success or failure.

## Respect

My word is my bond.

Horses that are overworked or are being overtrained will lose their enthusiasm for their work and go "sour". People must be conscious of the same phenomenon in our own species. In this section, Roberts speaks of intrinsic versus extrinsic learning.

- **Extrinsic:** coming from outside. Forced motivation.
- **Intrinsic:** coming from within. Self-motivated.

"If the student takes on information willingly, there is a good chance he will remember it" (Roberts, 2000, p. 131). Consider training a racing horse to start from a stall in a nonviolent way: no whips or yelling, simply opening the gates with more experienced horses beside who will start the race, goading the green horse to join in the fun. Roberts believes people will be more positive and productive if they too have

the opportunity to impress their peers with positive actions that result in positive consequences. Giving horses or people a chance to choose their consequences encourages the development of a sense of responsibility for one's actions. Ownership of choice negates the necessity of someone in the business of discipline or punishment.

"The psychology of positive reinforcement is most effective" (Roberts, 2000, p. 138).

## Contracts

Roberts carefully details his "Blackboard System" as a method of assisting parents with children expressing behavior issues. Two boards are placed in a prominent position in the home. Parents and child are co-owners and co-signers of the boards. The boards set up a contract bilaterally agreed to by parents and child—a response to (+) or (-) behavior. The (+) board outlines a (+) consequence for a (+) contract, while the (-) board outlines a (-) consequence for a (-) contract. Roberts stresses

several keys to the success of the system:

- (+) or (-) the consequence must be followed through.
- Step back and smile in a tantrum situation.
- Refusal to honor the contract restricts a child from enjoying any privileges.
- If the action/outcome is (-), appear

sorrowful/disappointed, not angry. The (-) consequence should occur as soon as possible thereafter.

- Reward with praise/love when the (-) task has been completed. Express hope for more success in the future.
- Don't get involved in encouraging a (+) decision or discouraging a (-) one—remember it is entirely the child's decision.





# The Good Parent



Let the child succeed,  
Let the child fail.

In this chapter, Roberts reiterates that his hope for this book is that it will bring increased attention to the close tie species can share, and that by examining those connections we can yield a fresh perspective not only on interspecies relationships, but also on human relationships.

Growing up, Roberts' (2000) deep kinship with horses led to his theory "that the behavior of *Equus* was closely connected to the behavior of man" (p. 150). When Roberts pursued post-secondary education, he was drawn to the studies of family and infant behavior. The experience was enlightening as Roberts observed firsthand how behavioral patterns are formed in the first 60 days of

life, and developed a lasting interest in family relationships and behavior. Much of Roberts' work with horses translates to people who parent:

- Make (+) easy and (-) difficult.
- Horses and humans must be responsible for their actions, including the consequences.
- Teach by allowing the path of least resistance.
- Be consistent, no mixed messages.
- Don't soothe during the tantrum—wait for it to play out, then offer comfort.
- It is virtually impossible to force, especially over the long term.
- You cannot demand respect.
- Discipline without anger or blame.
- "You must never give way on discipline that you have agreed upon or you will undo the good that it would have accomplished" (Roberts, 2000, p. 158).
- Be objective and don't interfere—allow exploration of the contract system, be firm on standing by one's word.
- You have to love enough to help one learn from his/her mistakes.

## Jennifer and Margaret

Roberts provides several anecdotes that speak to the value and success of his "Blackboard System", as well as how his approach in modifying a child's/youth's/teen's behavior has proven to be effective.

One mother, Jennifer, was fraught with frustration stemming from constant battles with her eight year old daughter, Margaret. Margaret was disagreeable and unreliable, so Jennifer opted to give Rob-

erts' system a try. The mother and daughter agreed to a set of contracts, free from loopholes. Margaret was motivated to work towards her goals and earn her family-based rewards, and Jennifer was relieved to have been freed of arguments and the responsibility of punishment. With everything clear and visible in black and white, excuses for forgetfulness or noncompletion were unacceptable.

As Margaret developed a heightened sense of responsibility and commitment, Jennifer found positive ways to challenge Margaret by increasing the complexity of Margaret's goals. As a result, the mother-daughter relationship improved dramatically, and peace, quiet, and harmony prevailed in the family unit.



"Working with horses is best

done when you make positive behavior easy and negative behavior difficult; this applies to the human as well"

(Roberts, 2000, p. 152).

Blackboard Example  
for Teens:

### POSITIVE BEHAVIOR:

Clean up room each day for 5 day period.  
A short trip outside the town with parents.

### NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR:

Untidy room throughout 5 day period.  
First clean room, then clean garage/family room.

*We have a horse for every type of rider -*  
FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO RIDE SLOW,  
WE HAVE SLOW HORSES.  
FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO RIDE FAST,  
WE HAVE FAST HORSES.  
AND FOR THOSE WHO DON'T LIKE TO RIDE  
WE ALSO HAVE HORSES...  
THAT DON'T LIKE TO BE RIDDEN.

# Choice

Let them decide.



“During Join-Up I never force the saddle or bridle on the horse. Instead, I provide an environment in which the horse willingly decides to allow himself to be saddled and eventually ridden. The horse takes responsibility

for his actions and the whole process is more effective, more speedy and more positive than that used by traditional horsemen.

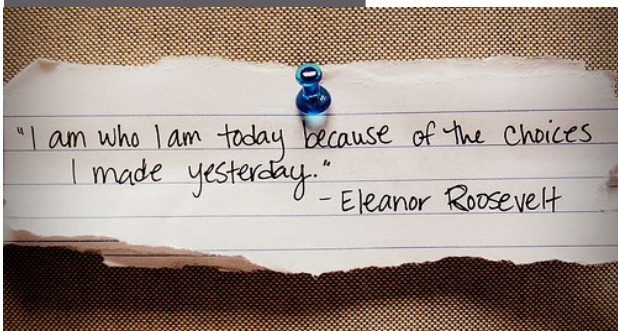
Choice is equally important to human beings... human beings need to be allowed freedom of choice so long as they are responsible for their own actions” (Roberts, 2000, p. 174).

In this chapter, Roberts shares three stories which speak to the value of empowering people through choice. He describes how providing choice can be paired with consequences so that when a (+) choice is made a (+) consequence is experienced and when a (-) choice is made a corresponding (-) consequence is the result. It is the freedom to choose that is at the heart of Roberts’ contract system.

Using a method involving kindness and communication, Monty Roberts can start a horse to saddle, bridle and rider in an average of **30 minutes**. He believes that the violence involved in the traditional method of horse breaking is “*unnecessary and counterproductive.*” “*I don’t ‘break’ horses in 30 minutes, I ‘start’ them,*” he says. “*I want*

Roberts’ sage advice reminds us of how powerful and motivating it is to have the option of choice. We each are blessed with a life to live and lead as we so choose. What we get out of our experience will depend very much on what we choose to put into it.

# Change



“I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday.”  
- Eleanor Roosevelt

## The Art of Listening

“When I step into the round pen to start a horse, I have a goal. I hope to elicit certain

behavior changes from my “client,” the horse. I do this not by insisting, threatening, intimidating or showing the horse who is “boss.” Rather, I do a lot of listening; I watch closely what is happening with the horse and try to understand what the horse is experiencing. Psychologists call it “client-centered counseling.” I remove the rope, and the horse is free to go away from me, or to move toward me. I set up a dialogue, and by understanding the horse’s own goals, I am able to join him in achieving them. I ask the horse questions and wait to see what answers I receive. “You can decide what you want to do,” I tell the horse. Through my body language I

set up the possibility for a partnership and let the horse decide. I am a solid, steady, dependable center to which the horse can respond. I know the stages of the dialogue, and I watch for them to emerge. If I get resistance, I back off rather than make a big deal out of it. Resistance from the horse just tells me that I need to do something different, to change my own approach.” (Roberts, 2000, pp. 189-190)

How might this logic be applied to humans?

For authentic and lasting change to be actualized in an individual it must be genuinely sought and desired by the individual. Real change cannot be forced or imposed. Motivational Interviewing (Miller, 1982), is a process by which people discover their intrinsic motivation—“listening for what is important to the person, and building motivation for change through the person’s own values” (as cited in Roberts, 2000, p. 190). The inter-

view process is designed to be very open-ended, asking the interviewee few questions while allowing a great deal of freedom and room for decision and choice. It is the job of the interviewer to observe carefully for signs of readiness and willingness to change, and to reinforce this. Should resistance or ambivalence arise, the interviewer helps direct the interviewee towards positive change.

Eg: People with addictions do not need others to remove their right to choose, rather “they and only they ultimately decide to continue down the same road, or to take a new one.... Pressure and abuse do not build strong people; they destroy good people” (Roberts, 2000, p. 192). Someone struggling with an addiction does not need to be reminded that they are doing wrong—they are very likely aware of it themselves and need support, safety, and the opportunity to change.

“You are not working on the horse, you are working on yourself.”

~ R. Hunt.



# Change: Slow is Fast

*Slow is fast and fast is slow.* When it comes to training horses Roberts lives by this truth, but it is also pertinent to dealings with people. It's not really about having patience, it's about taking the **time** you need to take to do a job right. Who of us hasn't experienced the following: "If you think you can complete a job in fifteen minutes, it's apt to take all day. If you work carefully as though you have got all day, it will often require only fifteen minutes" (Roberts, 2000, p. 195).

**Adrenalin** is another factor that must be carefully considered. Body language clearly indicates when adrenalin is up, heart rate increases, and there is a change in body odor. This gives rise to the

saying that prey animals in particular can "smell fear". When adrenalin is high, senses are heightened, survival instinct kicks in, and receptivity to learning goes down.

Consider the following scenario: You ask to speak with your boss and are told (s)he has no more than five minutes for you. How do you enter his/her office to present your idea/concern?...

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Enter with adrenalin high. | Nervous, eye on clock, try to spit it out quickly.  |
| Enter calm and relaxed.    | Focus on topic rather than time, likely successful. |

Once again Roberts reiterates

how important trust and motivation (intrinsic) are to creating optimum learning conditions. "With Join-Up the horse becomes a willing partner and makes a conscious decision to follow the path of least resistance that I have created. I allow the horse the right to negotiate and discuss with me how he feels about this proposed partnership, so once he has made a decision, his ability to learn is unhindered by any fear of pain or force." (Roberts, 2000, p. 199) One need not be concerned that learning take place with great speed, yet Roberts has found that when a human or animal consciously decides to accept change, learning actually takes less time.

*"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be lighted."*  
~ Plutarch

**Roberts recognizes that SPIRIT is enormously important. We should never elect to break the spirit of any animal or human, but seek to join with that spirit, and work with it to achieve greatness.**

## Change and the Nature of Leadership



Monty Roberts has shared his methods with hundreds of corporations and thousands of executives, explaining how

communicating to horses in their own language builds trust which is a springboard to accelerated learning. The transferability of the logic was especially meaningful for Clive Warrilow, who in 1994, was brought in as a "paramedic" to save struggling Volkswagen. The following is a summarized version of his reflections on his learning experience:

"When I started out my business career... the very nature of business around the world was one of an autocratic management style. There was little regard for people or respect for their thoughts; management was some-

what by dictatorship and through intimidation.

Times have changed and people have learned, and now there's an understanding of the tremendous power that can be leveraged when everyone's individualism and creativity are unleashed.

We knew we had to change the way people thought about themselves, their jobs, and how they worked—both as individuals and in teams.

The key question was: "How can you create a culture that values out-of-the-box thinking and participation when everyone is locked in a box on the corporate organization chart?"

Our greatest learning challenge was how to involve and engage all of our people in the business—setting them free to think and contribute.... To me, one of the greatest sins of management is to put people in boxes and keep them there.

What a terrible waste for the organizations and what a lost chance for personal growth!

... In our private lives we deal with all sorts of challenges and opportunities.... However, when we come to work, we are not asked to use our wisdom, intelligence, experience and leadership abilities.

I had become acquainted with Monty Roberts... and was truly inspired by the techniques he used.... This was not just about a horse. It was a metaphor for a style of management that says people will be better employees if you treat them with dignity, respect and honesty." (as cited in Roberts, 2000, pp. 203-204)

Warrilow's reflections culminate with a statement describing how trust, respect, focus, and consistency all work together to enhance the efficacy of a workplace and team.

# Conclusion



## SIMPLICITY

To conclude his work on how the behavior and training of horses can reflect as a mirror the behavior and choices of humans, Roberts (2000) states, “It is the *real things* in life that matter.... On our death beds it will not be technology or modern advances that will be foremost in our minds, but the touch of a loving hand, the image of a loyal companion or the memory of friends and family who have gone before,

leaving fond memories” (p. 206).

Roberts (2000) cautions people not to become too caught up in their goals, “In order to achieve your goals in life, it is critically important to detach yourself from them. It is counterproductive to dwell on the outcome while in the act of pursuing it” (p. 207).

Finally, with respect to simplicity, Roberts advises people to seek not to teach, but rather to work conscientiously on fostering an environment in which learning can take place—for horses and humans.

## THE POWER OF GENTLENESS

Roberts readily admits that despite his extensive experience, he is still learning, still discovering, and still refining his training approaches. This is the challenge Roberts poses to anyone intrigued by Join-Up, to

anyone wondering if and how the process might work for them. “Reapproach everything you

know with wonder and curiosity. Study yourself, humans in general and then your work organization. Learn from people through observation and interaction. Learn to see; listen intently with your eyes and ears. Allow your mind to accept and receive messages you never realized existed” (Roberts, 2000, p. 208).

Roberts is swift to rebuke those who equate gentleness with weakness, slowness, and lack of discipline. Knowledge, calmness, willingness are powerful supports for the merits of gentleness, and gentleness is the approach that Roberts believes can truly revolutionize how we interact within and across our species.

Before enlightenment  
you chop wood and  
carry water;  
after enlightenment  
you chop wood and  
carry water.  
~ Proverb

## My Thoughts on Horse Sense for People

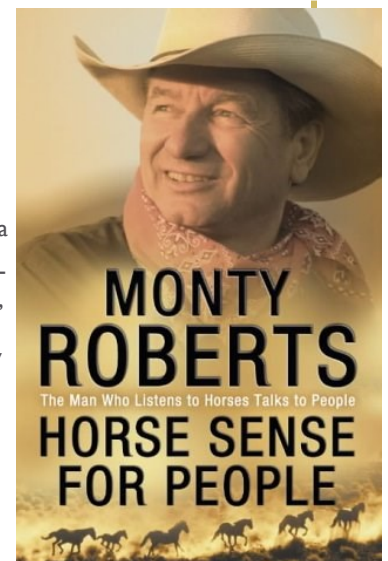
“Your horse is a mirror to your soul.  
Sometimes you might not like what you see.  
Sometimes you will.”

—Buck Brannaman

I enjoyed this book as it is an easily accessible read, highly relatable to both my personal and professional lives. Rife with Roberts’ philosophy on everything from horse training to child rearing, some simple truths ring through. Unfortunately, what I felt the book held in sensible and honest value was unsatisfyingly buried in a lack of organization and ineffectual structure. Parts of the book plodded on, while others repeated ad nauseam. Yet Roberts

is not without charm, and the stories he presents are generally purposeful additions. I will caution, if you are looking for a checklist or handful of ready-made ideas to transform your corporation or workplace culture you will find no such thing. Roberts’ ideas for these entities are broad and generic. On the other hand, parents and childcare providers may find great applicability in Roberts’ Blackboard System of contracts.

I greatly admire what Monty Roberts stands for—an individual who truly exemplifies what it means to be a lifelong learner, and genuinely seeks to make a contribution to the world that will improve it for future generations to come. From a Human Resources perspective, I particularly connected with the chapters on “Trust” and “Change”. I believe individuals flourish when they feel valued and respected, when they are appropriately challenged (to learn and grow), and when they are given opportunities to speak up, make choices, and carry responsibility. For me, it makes sense that we should treat people and animals with kindness and gentleness. This is not to say a leader should be soft or without direction, but rather a leader should be skilled in communication, in reading signs, and in creating environments that foster learning and the acceptance of change.



Roberts, M. (2000). *Horse sense for people: The man who listens to horses talks to people*. London, England: HarperCollins Publishers.