

Whose Method Is It? – Carolyn Myre - 2007



Photo courtesy of Anne Riddell

Many people ask the question “Whose Method is it?” when it comes down to Natural Hoof Care. The response received can be very daunting. There are many individuals out there claiming to have their very own method. The truth is, it’s the horse’s method; the method of all horses and not just the wild ones. No one can own this, or put a label on it, it belongs to the horse.

Many might also ask “What is the natural trim based on the wild horse?” The wild horse trim does not attempt to turn domesticated horses into wild ones; it simply mimics the “natural wear” they would get if they were moving around as much as nature intended for them. Wild horses move around as much as 20-30 miles per day foraging for food, water and minerals. Our domesticated horses simply do not get anywhere near that amount of exercise. This means then that our horses do not wear their hooves down naturally like the wild horses and will require regular trimming of the hooves that mimics as closely as possible natural wear. Many argue that their horses are not mustangs and for that reason, their horses can never have hooves like that. The one correct part of that statement is that our horses will never have hooves that look exactly the same as the wild horse model – after all, they are domesticated but they can have healthy, strong hooves capable of every high performance sport known by the Equine world. A common misconception of the Mustangs of the American West is about the history of the breed. Some forget that these horses developed shortly after the war when large numbers of domesticated horses ranging from light riding horse breeds to carriage and draft breeds either escaped or were turned loose by people who could not keep them anymore. Those horses could not have had hooves looking like today’s Mustangs. It was the lifestyle change that caused their hooves to adapt into such works of art, not their breeding history.

The trim methods that are most conducive to maintaining comfortable, high performance hooves are those that abide by non-invasive, intuitive

techniques that never place the horse inside the box so to speak. Each and every horse is an individual just like humans are. Treating each horse as an individual, reading the hoof and respecting the live sole plane will be conducive to the healing and prevention of all types of pathology.

The hoof care specialist should always treat and address the WHOLE horse and pay special attention to each individual's diet and lifestyle as they play a much larger part in the health of the hooves than just the trimming aspect. It is well established that metabolic issues due to un-natural feeding practices and conventional treatments for metabolic issues are the cause of a host of equine conditions such as Cushing's disease, insulin resistance, laminitis and tying up. What we must first recognize is that it is not our just our tools that heal horses; it is the horse that does the healing. We as horse owners and horse care professionals must simply open the door and lead them back to what's natural so they can begin to heal.

The truth about our horses is that nothing about domestication is "natural" to them. Each and every "un-natural" influence that is placed upon them in domestication is a factor in slowly breaking them down. The sooner natural hoof care, natural lifestyle, diet and horse keeping practices are implemented; the sooner the domesticated horses can be returned to healthy, sound, active horses.