

***BOLD CONVERSATIONS WITH NATURE – INSPIRED PRESENCE™***

***“To these animals, the ability to intuit fear in a distant herd member and act on this feeling without hesitation is a lifesaving skill. Their innate ability for resonating with another being's trust, joy, or confidence is a life enhancing skill.”***  
***~ Linda Kohanov, The Tao of Equus ~***

***Inspired Presence™*** is a powerful program using Equine Assisted Learning developed by Sophia Associates in partnership with Robin Dunning and Pam Dudek of *The Horse Inspired Growth & Learning Center*. Equine assisted learning uses the horse as a feedback partner. As part of our team, the horses are interactive partners in activities with you that elicit natural responses and patterns of behavior. Their inherent ability to accurately read their environment allows for immediate, honest feedback that allows you to learn and to develop *inspired presence*. The horse becomes the catalyst for the unspoken conversations that drive team dynamics, illustrating limiting behaviors and through expert facilitation, identifying alternatives to move teams to cohesion, high performance, intrinsic commitment and honest collaboration.



**FAQ's about our Inspired Presence™ program**

**In general terms, how does the program work?**

This can be a stand-alone program or integrated into a longer conference or retreat. We use a number of facilities to minimize travel and accommodate location needs.

Before the retreat we meet with you to determine your desired goals and outcomes. On site, Robin and Pam will introduce you to your partners in learning, the horses. No previous experience with horses is needed and there is no riding of the horses. Amazingly, you will find that the horse may choose you!

Robin and Pam will take you through a series of exercises designed to elicit natural responses and patterns of behavior and invoke your playful side while your horse will be the mirror, reflecting back to you your feelings and thoughts, hidden strengths and limiting beliefs. You receive immediate, honest feedback through the horse. As one client said, “There is nowhere to hide with the horse!” Learning opportunities are in everything you do and the facilitators will expertly guide you through powerful questions, demonstration, observation, and practice by doing, teaching one another, and real-time group discussion. The day concludes with a group coaching session to debrief your learning and create connections to your thinking and behaviors at work. This is a powerful experience and will invoke a holistic experience incorporating mind, body and spirit to teach inspired presence and group synergy.

**I've heard of this before but will our team actually change and work more cohesively?**

In my column for Smart CEO magazine in the March 2010 issue I explore the need to develop leaders and the value of experiential learning. [Click here](#) to read the article “Horse Sense: A corporate seminar that bucks the trend.”

In a recent research study conducted in Sweden by the Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences, researchers discovered that horses respond to unconscious physical changes that accompany a shift in a person's emotions making horses a unique and transparent gauge on emotional intelligence.<sup>1</sup> Equine assisted learning has been around for years yet it isn't until now that we are seeing the application to leadership development. Our focus is to develop skills as individuals and as a collective team through the lens of leadership so that issues of engagement, accountability and trust may be addressed safely and indeed transformed for better performance.

**Do we have to ride horses or have experience with horses?**

No previous experience with horses is needed and there is no riding of the horses.

**Where does this program take place?**

Locations we use are primarily in the MD, DC, VA, and PA areas. *The Horse Inspired Growth & Learning Center Inc.* has it's own barn and outdoor facility in Parkton, MD.

**Is this done outdoors or indoors?**

We prefer to run the program outdoors as Nature itself becomes a teacher and the fresh air supports holistic learning. During inclement weather we have access to indoor facilities to host the learning program.

**How large a group can you manage effectively?**

An ideal group size is between 5-10. With larger groups, we may break into smaller groups and take turns actively working with the horses and observing or do multiple sessions in the same day.

**How can I trust that the facilitators are highly competent in managing situations and coaching our team?**

Sophia Associates works with certified and highly trained and experienced associates. The Horse Inspired Growth and Learning Center Inc. has provided Equine Assisted Learning for its clients for the past 5 years.

Robin Dunning has worked in the horse industry for over 30 years and is certified by the EAGALA organization as an Equine Specialist. Having owned her farm for the past 17 years she experiences the horses on a daily basis.

Pam Dudek has always been a horse person, admiring, owning and riding horses throughout her life. She is a licensed clinical social worker with over 19 years experience in behavior change education and counseling. She has 11 years of experience as a division chief in a health organization experiencing the same issues that most managers deal with in their organizations. Pam and Robin work in tandem in the ring.

My background consists of over twenty years in business and extensive coaching experience at all organizational levels. I am a P.C.C. certified coach having completed The Georgetown Leadership Coaching Certification program. My role is to observe, give feedback, inquire and ground the learning in your everyday work world and help you apply your learning as soon as you return to work.

**Are these horses specially trained?**

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<sup>1</sup> EQUUS Magazine September 2009 P. 16

<http://www.zinio.com/reader.jsp?issue=416094579&o=int&prev=si>

They are not specially trained. They live and act and respond naturally, which makes them a powerful feedback partner.

### **Can you describe how we might integrate Equine Assisted Learning in our training or other learning programs?**

It is best to call me for customization so I can assist you in creating a learning experience that meets your objectives. I can suggest some options based on past programs.

*Option One: **Inspired Presence™*** can be designed as a half-day or full-day where participants may meet at the stable facility or be transported as a group from one location to the stables.

*Option Two:* A multi-day Leadership Retreat or integrating this program into an existing conference or retreat supports traditional learning and encourages trust building leading to bold conversations that matter. We use a number of facilities to minimize travel and accommodate location needs.

### **Our Leadership Retreat program would include:**

Day one begins with a check-in at a nearby inn or hotel followed by an opening reception and dinner. A short introduction to the next day can be delivered that evening during the reception or after dinner.

The following morning your group is transported to the facility where your learning will begin with choosing your equine partner. The morning is spent learning with the horses.

In the afternoon, you return to your hotel and relax before the work session debriefing your experiences and translating your learning to application at work. This session will combine real-time coaching and leadership development. The day concludes with an elegant and relaxing meal. Depart day three after a hearty breakfast and a morning presentation or with a session on team dynamics and agreements that will be taken back to work.

### **What else can we include?**

These options may be customized further to meet your learning requirements. Some optional activities to consider in multi-day retreats are:

- Assessments may be included in extended programs. Depending on your goals, participants may take online assessment instruments with a debriefing included in a multi-day retreat. Assessment options include MBTI, DISC, The Leadership Circle 360 Profile or The Leadership Circle Culture Survey, Leadership Agility, Team Assessments and more.
- Shorter presentations on topics such as Giving and Receiving Feedback, Coaching Skills or Conflict Management Skills or other topics may also be designed to be included in the multi-day retreat.

### **I need to ask more questions.**

Contact us to learn more about customizing an **Inspired Presence™** experience for your leadership or project team. It works, it's fun and it will change the way you interact at work to better support the organization's success.