



Ten Horse Hugs

Horse Wisdom for the Human Soul

a little book of coping strategies for daily life



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This ebook offers an introduction to coping strategies for everyday living. It is not meant as a substitution for professional support.

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This ebook is written by Wendy Elrick, the owner and operator of The Equine Connection Coaching Services Ltd. Wendy works as a counselor and has done so for the last 20 years. Ten years ago she and the herd at The Equine Connection started offering equine-assisted learning and therapy sessions to clients. Currently, participants can access individual sessions, engage in three hour self-development workshops, attend three day retreats, as well as learn how to facilitate equine-assisted learning sessions. The Equine Connection also runs the Healing through Horses program that offers a ten week trauma recovery group for women and an eight week leadership group for girls. Wendy is also very happy to facilitate custom-made sessions for you.

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Landor's photo was taken by Morten Byskov.





What are Coping Skills?

“Not all those who wander are lost.” JRR Tolkien

Coping skills are ideally activities we engage in to stay connected to our own inner worlds, to the truth of who we are. In practice, they are also habits we engage in when we feel out of sorts. In a perfect world, we would all learn coping skills in the first 12 years of our lives. Unfortunately, in the western world, learning healthy coping skills is not yet a priority. This leads to people ‘accidentally’ learning both healthy and unhealthy coping skills; examples of each being exercising and smoking.

To cope with the unpredictable events that happen in our lives, it is a good idea to have two or three coping skills that you do every day. By doing them daily, they become habits you do not need to think about. For instance, if deep breathing is something you do each day, when a life event leads to you feeling high anxiety, you will naturally deepen your breathing.

The horses are offering you ten coping skills. Some involve using imagery and are very private. Others invite you to engage with the outside world. The coping skills make use of our different strengths. For instance, some are cognitive, others are body-based. It is effective to have various coping skills to honour all of ourselves: body, mind, emotion and spirit. These skills keep us grounded in a life that is a fit for us. So, even though our lives can wander in all sorts of directions, coping skills keep us from getting lost.

A coping skill is like a hug. It is a gift to yourself. A hug from a horse is an even bigger gift!





Horses as Healers & Teachers

“Everything is alive...listen.” Author Unknown

At The Equine Connection, a primary goal is to introduce people to the healing qualities of interacting with animals and with nature. Based on the perspective that everything is energy, it makes sense that the horses mirror our energy and that we are drawn to aspects of nature that are related to our energetic state. For ten years now, I have witnessed, over and over again, how the horses not only mirror us, but also respond empathically to our energy, to our whole being. I have also experienced, over and over again, how nature supports me by giving me messages about whatever is going on in my life.

Seeing the animals who come into your life as healers and teachers is a coping system in itself, and can offer a spiritual framework for how you live your life. It indicates that there are aspects of life that are bigger than us human beings, which provides hope and brings mystery into our lives. This can only be a good thing!

