

Ananda Ranch

Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE 12 April-June 2014



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Denim Day is April 23th, 2014

In 1998, an Italian Supreme Court decision overturned a rape conviction because the victim wore jeans, reasoning she must have helped her attacker remove them.

Wearing jeans on Denim Day, April 24th, is a way to stand and support survivors and to protest against misconceptions relating to sexual assault.



2 Ways to Help Victims

One: Be Aware of Changes in Behavior

The most common support for survivors is friends and family. Don't be afraid to ask about the person's change in behavior:

"When I got home, I was just so upset about it and I was crying and she [a friend] asked me what was wrong"

Two: Be Supportive

Listen to the survivor and reassure them it was not their fault.

"She [a therapist] was calm, very supportive. She told me it wasn't my fault; she encouraged me and gave me strength."

Reduce Stress with Physical Activity

Physical activity is vital to a child's physical maturity as exercise promotes growth and development (Santrock, 2009), enhances children's gross and fine motor skills (Feldman, 2006), and reduces the risk of obesity (Taylor, 2012). In addition, research in neuroscience has suggested that exercise also generates the production of new brain cells, reduces stress, and improves mood, learning, and memory capabilities (Jensen, 2008). However, over the past two decades there has been a prominent decline of physical activity among children (Anderson, Hughes, & Fuemmeler, 2009). Sedentary behaviors, such as television viewing and computer activities, have led to numerous cases of childhood obesity (Goldfield, 2012) and have increased risks for cardiovascular disease (Taylor, 2012). Parents have a pivotal role in shaping the exercise behaviors of their children, particularly younger children, by modeling attitudes and approaches concerning physical activity, which their children will generally adopt (Anderson, Hughes, & Fuemmeler, 2009). Positive parental outlooks and behaviors about physical activity have affirmative correlations to early and middle childhood exercise preferences and activities (Barbour, Houle, & Dubbert, 2003).

Relaxation techniques have proven successful at relieving stress, muscle tension, and anxiety (Taylor, 2012). Engagement in relaxation activities, such as the ones used in Zen meditation, induces a physiological reduction response that helps to counter stress (Collins et al., 2003). Decreases in levels of cortisol and ACTH, have also been found in relaxation practices like yoga; in fact, functional imaging (fMRI) research data has illustrated the deactivation of vital stress response systems, primarily in the limbic brain regions, when people are engaged in sensory-motor activities which correspond to spiritual practices (Varambally & Gangadhar, 2012).



Principles for Project Management Success

One: Making Time

One of the top identified barriers for participating in physical activities is lack of time. Allowing jobs, family responsibilities and other tasks to take away from our physical well-being means deteriorating our abilities to be the best at our jobs, family responsibilities and the other tasks we identify as critically important.

Two: Weaning Away from Technology-Overload

The internet, cell phones and television make it difficult to take time out for physical activity. Unplug and take a walk with the friends you are talking or texting to instead. Make that mandatory fifteen minute break at work, your time to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.

Three: Choosing Healthy Relationships

Not having someone to join in on the activity is a deterrent and choosing to do an activity without your friends or family can feel more like pressure than pleasure. Family members may be stuck in a routine without even noticing it.



Children's Awareness

A horse's reactions may remain insignificant to the human world unless we apply some aspect of life to it. Once we change our perspective, this same horse and the reactions that are exhibited may explain a devastating life experience or help heal certain emotional inhibitions. Here is an example of just what I mean.

A beautiful young student of mine was working with a four-year-old gelding that she was very familiar with. The connection between the two of them had always been a positive one; in fact, it was quite humbling to watch these two free spirited youths maneuver with what could only be described as a well synchronized dance of two beings molding into one. On one particular day, when the two were getting ready to do some ground work, the young girl's partner began to act aggressively toward her.

Over the next few weeks, the girl continued working with other horses but, struggled to get back the courage and confidence she had once possessed before the young gelding had broken her trust and self-assurance.

Finally, while brushing out a horse, the young girl confided in me that she was experiencing a lot of trouble

at home. She was fighting a lot with her father and she hated the negative words and feeling of control that he had over her.

She told me that the day with the young gelding she wanted to be the boss and to control some aspect of her life. I explained to her that, the horse was responding to this anger in the same way she and her father were handling their situation. Fear is often masked by anger. The gelding was fearful of the girl's sudden feelings of anger and masked his fear with aggressive behavior. Family dynamics can often display this same theme.

With love and positive reinforcement the girl and the young gelding once again found their synchronicity. The young girl had also sat down with her father and expressed to him the pain she was feeling when he would use hurtful words toward her. With the same immense dignity and grace she had possessed in working with the horse, the young girl was able to communicate her needs to her father.

It took a lot of courage, confidence, and determination to confront him and convey her feelings. Although father and daughter had a longer period of healing to work through, the experience between girl and horse had made the first step in the healing process possible.

The Mask of Fear

Very often young people hold up a smile only to hide the pain and fear that they feel inside. There is a saying, "the bigger the front, the deeper the pain." Some individuals will strike out and present a very hardened front, while others will work exhaustingly hard at building a bright and cheerful persona so that no one can see the turmoil stirring inside them.

Control

We so deeply feel we need to be in control in order for the world to go as we plan, yet in order to heal our emotional inhibitions and restore our spontaneity and ability for healthy recreation and social functioning we must learn to give away some of our control and let life be what it is.

By taking a second look at the circumstances it changes our perspective from blaming a young horse for acting out to questioning his reaction to what could be a pure response to a deeply emotional storm that had not yet surfaced.

We are never truly able to control how people treat us, nor can we do enough to win some people's approval of us; however, we are all capable of controlling how we respond to others and we can learn how to defuse the power that hurtful words and actions can have on us.

Question and Answers

Q: Why are horses so good at uncovering our feelings?

A: Horses are wonderful teachers. They have the ability to look beyond the facade people present to the rest of the world and see the reality of a person's life.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 3rd: Creative Interactions
10a – 11:30a

**Saturday, May 31st: Environmental
Enrichment with Horses**
10a – 11:30a

Saturday, May 3rd: Creative Interactions
10a – 11:30a

**Saturday, June 28th: Understanding the
Effects of Trauma**
7:00p – 8:30p

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Denim Day

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Reduce Stress with Physical Activity

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Horses Heal the Scars Time Can't Take Away

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