



Herd Dynamic Profiling/Sample

The endearing beauty of the horse, though indeed a magical creature to behold, is found within the unseen world of emotion. With elegance abundant shimmering just below the surface of what we see, our purest relationship, our most profound partnership, is found not in “what” horses are, but in “who” the horse is.

Try as we might, we cannot machine emotion, and as emotional athletes, horses are quite reflective of their environment in many of the ways that we ourselves can be. No true effort in understanding the total horse can be made without comprehending the fact that as sentient creatures, there is an operating system running the machine. In order for physical talent to be fully realized, there has to be psychological ability with the capacity to optimize it; the horses’ herd dynamic makeup. Just like it is essential to develop the horse physically in a responsible manner, it is equally if not more important, to nurture the horse psychologically. Physical talent and ideal body-type, a great pedigree, all important indeed, fall short in the face of competition if the mental athlete cannot sustain the effort needed. Mental fatigue derails more than just a horse during competition, it capitulates their efforts of preparation.

There are a great many ingredients that comprise behavioral characteristics and traits, investigating these to better understand their functionality and how they are impacting the horse is vital to the relationship with the horse-athlete. Just like there are a myriad of physical factors that have to align for the horse to actually perform, there are many key factors that need to be accounted for or in order for the horse to have the *ability* to perform. Herd Dynamic Profiling, exemplated below, is a powerful tool to have in your toolbox of information to help you not only better understand your horse, but also to help create programs that will not be antagonistic to their inherent nature. If you’re not coaching with the herd dynamics, you’re coaching against them. Investing in the physical horse, important, an investment in the emotional horse, priceless.

Herd Dynamic Profiling, a journey into the artistry of the horse, studies 6 key areas of the horse’s psyche to determine their impact on the horse and their effect on the horse as an athlete. Like pieces of a puzzle, we begin to see a pure image of the horse as told by them, not assumed by us. Information that is vital to building a better relationship with your horse through a deeper understanding of them; how they view world is important for helping create an environment where harmony and success are synchronized naturally.

This sample profile will offer you a window into the unique world of herd dynamic evaluations and the type of information that you can get about your horse(s). All profiles are unique, horses are evaluated and profiled as individuals first and how they fit within the demands of their disciplines second. It is important to be mindful that the discipline doesn’t select the horse, the horse selects their discipline. What a horse is “bred to do” and what a horse is capable of doing, are not always in agreement.

When you embrace your horse and discover who they are as individuals, you begin to appreciate how they fit into the natural herd dynamics. By taking a view from the hoof, we realize how everything they are, affects everything they can become.

To learn more about our work and research in herd dynamics, check out the blog section of our website.

Herd Dynamic Profiling; *because if you’re not thinking forward, you’re already behind.*

Kerry M Thomas

www.thtbloodstock.com

Sample Analysis

Herd Dynamic Video Analysis: Baker, Holsteiner

Occupation: Pleasure Riding/ Hunter

Age: 11 Years

Owner: XXX

Herd Dynamic Profile

Behavioral Genetic Overview/Natural Herd-Hierarchy Range:

Baker is a hardworking and good-natured horse, there is a mixture of expression within his psyche between inherent tendency and learned behavior. His manner of expression is indicative of a horse that is mid to upper mid-level in the herd dynamic hierarchy range making his adaptability to environmental changes about a 65% Outsource-Dependent Value, (ODV) leaving him with 35% Independent Psychological Value, (IPV). This ratio indicates the manner of interpretation which directly manages his view of the world and where he fits into it, determining his fluency between self & environment. His ability to manage stress and learn predicated upon this. 65% ODV V/S 35% IPV means that the majority of Baker's interpretative aspect is sourced through something in the environment other than self, and his ability to independently interpret has less influence and will be reliant upon singular stimuli. This impacts motion and is the difference between reactive and purposeful movement under stress.

Baker is a kind, determined horse that works hard to find and maintain fluency between himself and his environment, there is a sweet sincerity in this effort. His psychological rhythms are moderate to fast paced with a herd dynamic hierarchy range befitting that of a horse whose ideal companion-horse has an ODV less than 60%. His human in saddle will equally benefit by riding with emotional conviction.

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MTB (Mind-To-Body) Efficiency Rating:

(MTB Rating reflects athletic fluency between the psychological horse and their physical expressions; how is emotional energy being physically distributed.)

Baker = 64 MTB – Comment: *Average to Athletic*; the psychological capacity of Baker supports moderate athletic expression physically.

*MTB Efficiency Scale = 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest)

Sensory & Psycho-Sensory Soundness:

The efficacy of the sensory system is an essential component to how Baker identifies and interprets his world. Understanding how his view from the hoof is operating, vital to your relationship with him.

Sensory Soundness is the fluent transition of identified environmental stimuli from one or more of the 6 sensory aspects (forward/left-right oblique eye/ear & ear/feel and rear feel) with smooth sensory-lead-change (SLC) capacity (identified stimuli channeled through 2 or more aspects before being funneled into the psyche). Psycho-Sensory Soundness is the proper interpretation of the stimuli.

Baker has moderate sensory lead change ability with a heavy reliance on the visual aspect, meaning that the majority of new stimuli in areas not in the forward aspect will be sought for visual clarity before ingested into the psyche. When this occurs, there can be a disruption to movement, an interruption to smooth action when “asked”. Sensory-sticking between transitions is a delayed psychological response accompanied by residual, (reactive) movement. The degree of which is determined by both his rate of physical motion paired with the pace of his mental rhythm. It is imperative for sustained fluency that the sensory/psycho-sensory clears space at least two times faster than the body is moving.

Baker has slightly above average Psycho-Sensory Soundness. This reflects his inherent ability to properly rely on the associative aspect, “learned behaviors” to assist the interpretive process of natural tendency. When experiences happen too quickly, they get delayed during interpretation and mix with the anticipatory response mechanism, becoming an assumed response. This is expressed in a disruption to the fluency of movement. In this case, those disruptions are often minor (tail stress-expression the most common) and Baker generally dials himself back on task and regains his core Mine-To-Body efficiency rating.

Stress Management Expression & Emotional Energy Distribution:

Baker’s primary manner of processing emotional stresses are through physical movement, the majority of low intensity emotional stresses are expressed in his tail carriage. This style of expression is less inhibiting to over-all physical motion however it does make him a bit emotionally heavy, which translates directly through his body and can anchor his agility. Stress is best managed by Baker when it is of a singular nature, which minimizes the outsourcing dependency that multiple stimulus brings to his herd dynamic makeup. (When we isolate the herd animal, we are exposing both individual strength & weakness).

Accumulative stresses disrupt Baker’s athletic fluency by pin-balling through his body. Instead of being expressed through the tail, like common singular stresses, multiple stresses congeal in the psyche. Asked for movement his emotional energy distribution bottles-up and physical processing demands can create a knee-jerk reaction of non-purposeful motion. Emotional energy that normally is distributed forward suddenly pushing him “upward” before slowly dialing back to even, to level, then to forward. This is represented as “bumpy” under stress, and with Baker, whose emotional energy is naturally high density and

condensed because of his psychological rhythms, the intensity of his disruptions can be elevated. However elevated disruptions will generally be brief. Baker possesses the capacity to dissipate stress quickly and works to regain proper and balanced energy distribution, with generally minimal hesitation and drag. He carries little residual or lingering stress from trivial challenges.

Growth Patterns; Learned Behaviors/Natural Tendency:

At this stage in his life, Baker has established natural tendencies that are interspersed with learned behaviors, however in his case natural tendency is the prevailing trait. Because of this, his inherent growth patterns run through natural tendency and subsequent learned behaviors will only be successfully implanted as actual psychological growth when run through single stimuli triggers. In this manner learned behaviors can co-exist with natural tendency because they are not antagonist to one another, this allows for sequential-learning and is the natural growth pattern common with Baker's herd dynamic. Non-sequential coaching efforts, the merging of two or more different tasks too closely related, will default to natural tendency, experienced as a disruption of physical fluency. In order to avoid these interruptions additional "time-in-motion" between tasks will be needed. If he were a musical score, Baker would be of smooth transitions between tones, slightly protracted but always definitive.

Relationship Summary & Coaching Forward:

Coaching that is heavily centered through singular stimuli, creating layers that appear to be as one, will aid in developing fluent expressions through his stress filters helping to sustain purposeful, athletic movements. Point to point, target to target focus points and tasks, that are linear psychologically, properly spaced with time enough to allow physical filtering between "asks", are key. Focus on the forward visual aspect as primary and allow Baker to find harmony between the pace of his psychology and his physical cadence. This will be a natural aid helping to smooth his sensory lead change sequences by harmonizing with his psycho-sensory.

Communication with Baker should always be emotional as primary and corporeal as secondary. Horses that heavily rely on physical movement to filter their stress have a difficult time learning through physical-first que's. They will instinctually attach an action with an emotion rather than associating an emotion with an "ask" that follows it. When this happens the anticipatory response mechanism, responsible for tapping *basic instinct*, supersedes mind-to-body fluency and we forfeit the wheel of influence. As psychological cadence works to harmonize with environmental pace, a "bump in the road", that reactive movement before controlled motion, occurs. In this circumstance, the horse will by nature begin to associate similar physical triggers in their psyche, further disrupting smooth transitions. In short, physical as primary can interrupt his perception of the world around him and how he responds to it.

Emotional communication that precedes the physical form of it, *think it, envision it, own it* before you do it, before you ask of him to do, will assist Baker greatly. Horses that outsource seek their emotional comfort in others. You are his emotional absorption, helping filter stress before it has the chance to dramatically alter his physical movement. This mindset of emotional communication first should be a part of your mindset in all you do together, as this will deepen your relationship. Be mindful not to over-react



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to his bumps and bubbles, know he needs to move to filter. The key is to conduct that motion, mold it into an athletic expression. And of course, it goes without saying that during the course of all this, continued diligence in his physical health to stay ahead of any hidden aches is essential. These herd dynamic traits lend themselves to an individual who will carry an emotional reminder of a nagging physical pain especially when triggered by any particular movement during training.