



Awakening to Wellbeing Workshop  
Pine Knoll Center for Integrated Horsemanship  
October 4, 2014

Dear Gillian,

The experiences you, Virginia, and Grace provided during the Equine Assisted Learning Workshop I attended were exceptional and insightful. The workshop served as a growth and healing experience for me personally, but it also has extended to members of my family that weren't present for the workshop. It raised my awareness of what the challenges are in my own life, which prepared me to see more clearly the challenges in the lives of people who are closest to me. This positions me to help them in ways I could not before.

As you are well aware, developing relationships and building the trust necessary for people to engage in meaningful, personal conversations takes time. Additionally, these kinds of conversations are exactly what is necessary for healing to commence. The exercises with the horses expedite the development of relationships and trust, which eliminates the obstacles that workshop facilitators and participants must remove to get to "the root of the problem" and commence the healing process. It also establishes an experience that integrates all the human senses, which can be drawn on in the future in a more powerful and meaningful way than simply a discussion can provide.

My experience with horse/human interactions is that horses provide honest feedback that is free of judgment to the humans they interface with. Nonjudgmental feedback is especially effective for people like Wounded Warriors, who have dealt with traumatic transitions in their lives and often may be judgmental of themselves. This work will change lives in positive ways and I am thankful to have experienced it. Please continue this work.

Respectfully,

Sandy Gruzesky  
Commander, USN, Retired