

V-THINKING

Think of a relationship as being in the shape of a V. There are always two sides that respond to one another. This can be said about relationships between friends, a parent and a child, and even a horse and a human.

How the two communicate will determine their positions on the V, and how fulfilling the relationship is and how close the two individuals are. The whole point to “V-Thinking” is increasing our awareness of how to relate/ respond to that other being whom we are in relationship with, and how we move that relationship closer or create distance. The higher up someone is on the V, the more energy it takes, the more stress it creates, the further apart the two beings are and less in harmony. Figuring out when and how to respond to the other’s level of energy is key to moving down the V, eventually getting to the point at the bottom which represents understanding and togetherness.

Horse ~ Human

Horses are in tune to our feelings and their surroundings. If the human is feeling nervous or anxious the horse will mirror those feelings. Sometimes horses are easily excitable which make them shoot up the V, when this happens you have to be able to sense this to respond to their energy and invite them back down the V.

The Negotiation

When one side of the V recognizes where the other is on the V, they will be able to raise or lower their energy to match their partner. Sometimes there needs to be a pause and ask questions: Is there something I am not understanding? Are we in a power struggle?

In relationships we all can get stuck in being overwhelmed. In the role-play the parent offers to help get the child started on cleaning their room. How often in relationship with family members, co-workers and horses do we need to offer help or support in some form to change the intensity of the situation?

Have you ever been in a situation where your horse was triggered and if you became frustrated it made the situation so much worse? If we go into an emotional response the situation escalates. If we take a step back and realize the horse isn't doing something to us (don't take it personally) we are better able to get back towards the bottom of the V.

There are times when relationships become physically and emotionally unsafe. When you look at the top of the V notice how far apart the two beings in relationship are from each

other. This is a point where there often needs to be some form of outside support called in. If it's an abusive relationship one needs to seek professional help. If it's a horse that is completely outside of your ability to handle, find a professional trainer to help you.

As you begin using the V thinking model you will develop more trusting relationships that make both parties feel better about themselves. Great relationships can be better and hard relationships can be managed more easily.

V thinking in practice

Role playing tools: You will need a 20 foot length of rope for a group of 10 or more and space to make a wide V on the ground. Scenarios to role play. Participants to role play.

Follow up questions after working with your horse: When did you find yourself going up the V with your horse today? What did you do about it? Were you able to go back down the V once you went up? Where was your horse on the V?

The V-Thinking original concept was taught by Horseman Frank Bell, and further developed by Animals as Natural Therapy and Lorna Shepardson. © 2019

