



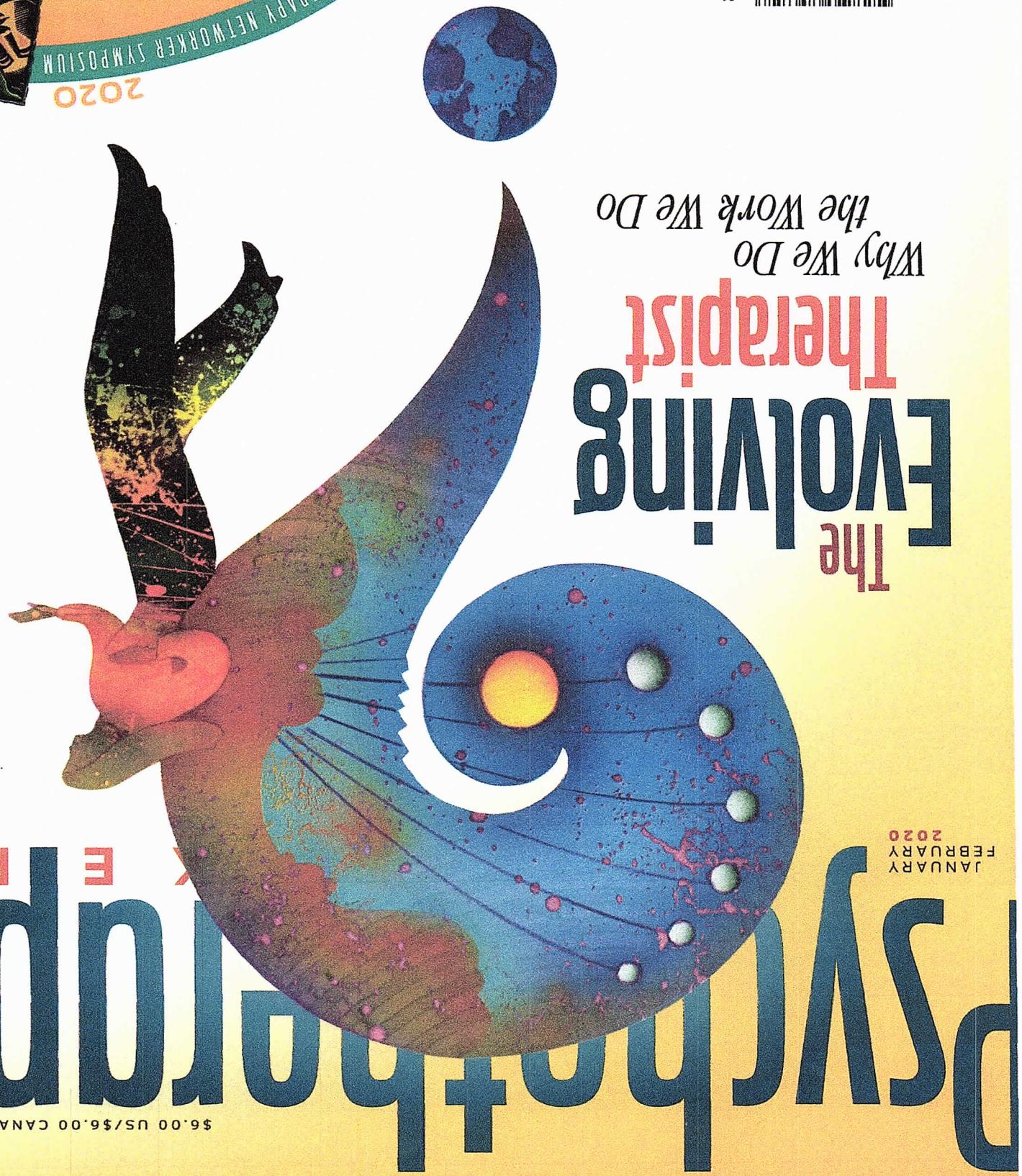
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Why We Do
the Work We Do

The Therapist Evolving

JANUARY 2020
FEBRUARY 2020



Psychotherapy

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Lessons in
Attunement

To Reveal or
Not to Reveal

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Nourishing the

PSYCHOThERAPy NETWOrKer SYMPOSIUM
2020



The Art of Healing in an Anxious Time

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What horsemanship can teach us about making sure our clients feel seen, heard, and helped.

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the field in the first place? Over time, has our quest changed?

and ponder the bigger picture: Why are we doing this thing called therapy? What drew us to

Why Do We Do the Work We Do?

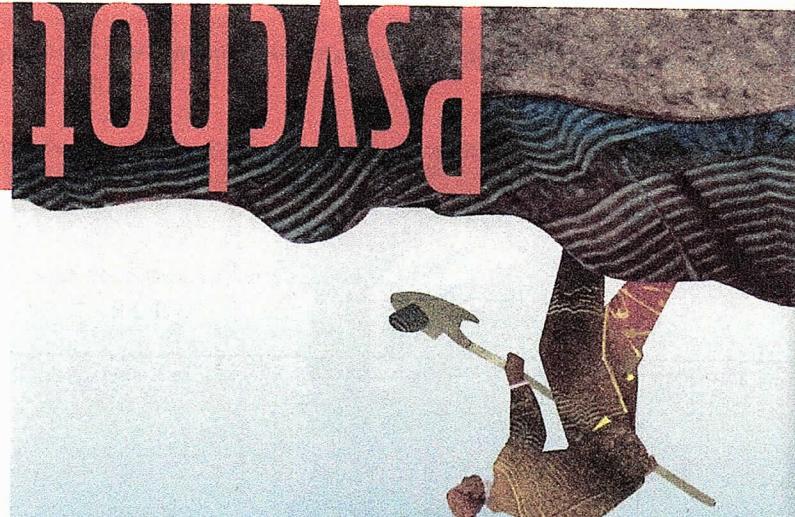
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The Evolving Therapist

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The meantime, you know where I'll
be. Maybe you can even join me at
McGinnis Meadows. 

A FINAL WORD

rather than expertise, seems to be the primary driver. That's a mistake. Be courageous and take a risk. So little is lost by asking.

*While this story is told from Matthewes's perspective, it was jointly written by the coauthors.

Lessons in



Meadows McGinnis YOU IN Meet

MILLER*
SCOTT
AND
MATTHEWES
BROOKES
BY

long journey followed, through mountain passes, hail, and rain, to a place where residents were packed into the vehicle. She didn't have time to object. A windy dirt road leading to the Lockup. Without warning, she and two other residents were unlocked, Jessie was going to leave. "She won't give you much trouble," Eventually, all came to know that even if she were respect among the staff, "as long as you give her space," they'd say, degree of No. But it was the first stable home she'd ever known. She'd even earned a Truth is, as lonely as she seemed, she'd grown fond of the place. Idyll? At this point, many professionals might label Jessie "institutionalized," although food and water were plentiful, power struggles, bullying, and other residents.

Although outside of meals and activities, she was left alone, unbothered by the place moved up the pecking order. The prize was isolation, a quiet spot where she could altercations were constant occurrences. In time, Jessie learned to use her small size and agility to surprise her opponents with powerful kicks, physical altercations were plentiful, power struggles, bullying, and other residents.

At this point, many professionals might label Jessie "institutionalized," although food and water were plentiful, power struggles, bullying, and other residents.

J Jessie didn't choose this life. She was born into harsh circumstances. Growing up in a rural Western desert town, separation and loneliness were what she knew best. The basics—food, water, shelter, safety—were always in question. Family life was also a struggle. Her parents and siblings were constantly moving from one place to the next; that is, until her mother was killed in a brutal and unexpected attack. Then the family was split up by the authorities. One brother was shipped off to California, the other farther north. Jessie was sent to live with other disabled orphans—a spot known to locals as the Lockup. A more apt description would be the Wild West.

Place

Don't get me wrong. I had a good experience in graduate school. I learned a great deal, met many talented and knowledgeable professors, and even passed several licensings and registration exams. As a professional, I've attended scores of workshops and trainings, all of which have expanded my knowledge and understanding of therapy. Yet despite these many experiences, and my continued interest and hopefulness, I was dogged by doubt, deeply discouraged that my investments of time and effort had yielded so little improvement in my effectiveness. Sure, I had more theoretical knowledge, but my clients didn't seem to feel better. How did I know this? For edge, but my clients didn't seem to improve in my effectiveness.

ties exist for professionals hoping to work directly on improving their ability to connect and align with

*Invariably, that's when
“Watch closely. If you blink,*

Much of the time, he seemed to be

more than four decades. It's some-
thing we know in our bones.
Curiously, despite being wide-
ly acknowledged as important,
even critical, a recent study by psy-
chologist Crystal McMillen at the
University of Southern Queensland
in Australia found a significant num-
ber of graduate schools spend no
time on learning or fostering the
development of relationship skills.
And while continuing education
workshops abound on mindfulness
brain-based, and other state-of-the-
art interventions, few opportuni-

Shayne seemed to know, even anti-cl-
cles in her face, and gritted her teeth.
Shayne said such moments, saying he could
tell something was up simply by look-
ing at her ears. Without hesitation,
he'd adjust, the same way a mas-
seuse changes the force and pres-
sure of touch, or a dancer stretches
between following and leading. It
never took long for the tension to
dissipate. Each time, her feelings of
comfort and security grew.

Three months after their first meet-
ing, everything about Jessie was differ-
ent. It would not be an exaggeration

"I knew it wouldn't take you too long to say hello," the cowboy said, his tone easy and light-hearted. Taking another step, she returned his attention. Again, her own behavior caught her by surprise. After all the abuse and neglect, the urge to come back was still there. With the touch of his hand, that feeling grew. It was more than reassuring. It actually felt healing.

Jessie and Shayne spent more and more time together. While mostly pleasantries, every so often, her trauri- matic past would creep into their interactions. Typically, she'd freeze up, hold her breath, tense the mus- cle, high-tension in her limbs, Jessie cau- tious yet stepped toward him. Just as quickly, he was moving toward her, repeating his name, looking so kind. His eyes—they extended his hand. His eyes—thick half-cocked and playful. Despite the smile, he was curious.

"I knew it wouldn't take you too long to say hello," the cowboy said, his tone easy and light-hearted. Taking another step, she returned his attention. Again, her own behavior caught her by surprise. After all the abuse and neglect, the urge to come back was still there. With the touch of his hand, that feeling grew. It was more than reassuring. It actually felt healing.

Jessie and Shayne spent more and more time together. While mostly pleasantries, every so often, her trauri-

unlike any she'd seen before. Gone were the sand and sagebrush. In their place, were brilliant green rolling hills dotted with aspen trees and scrub brush. It was here she met Shayne. Their first encounter was ultimately frightening and intriguing. She knew she shouldn't trust him. He could be a predator—she'd encountered many broad-shouldered, plaid-wearing men in her short life. And yet, when she approached, he seemed different, safe. "Hey there," he said in a quiet, confident voice. "My name is Shayne. Take all the time you want. No need for any trouble here."

His words didn't matter. Her instincts kicked in. Slowly, she turned her back and moved away. Out of the corner of her eye, she watched as he stood there, kicking at the dirt, playing with a length of rope in his hands. Who was this guy? Decked out in brightly colored, round-toe boots and a cream-colored, flat-brim hat, he was either a cowboy or the best poser she'd ever seen.

That's when she surprised herself. Without thinking, she turned back around, racing him head on. It wasn't a threat; she was curious.

Somewhere along the way, I started consulting with Scott about my outcomes with clients, much as I'd done elsewhere in therapeutic relationships.

A few years later, in my other life as a therapist, I was reviewing data from my clinical practice. I'd been measuring my results ever since attending my first workshop with Scott Miller during my first semester of graduate school. I administered two simple scales at each session with my clients. The first, given at the start, measured progress. The second, given at the end, assessed the quality of the therapeutic relationship.

IDENTITIES COLLIDE

Just enjoy the process.” Despite my deep skepticism, and occasional fear he was being more businesman than teacher, I persisted.

When ever I verbalized those thoughts, Shayne would remind me reassumingly, "This is a life long journey, my boy." Then he'd add, "And by the way, you haven't yet put in the time to earn the right to be frustrated, so enough of that. It'll come. For now,

I must have been blinking a lot. Many times, I simply couldn't see what he was talking about or doing. Often, exhausted and unable to sleep, I'd lie in bed wishing there was some kind of a protocol or script I could follow instead, similar to how I'd been trained in graduate school. Then again, on the rare occasions that he gave me explicit directions, I still couldn't make it work. That's when my thoughts would turn harsh. I'm never going to get this. Caught-in-schmowgit. I'm just

British Columbia, to remote Montana I spent a fortune on airfare, used all my vacation time and then some. There, with the mountains of Glacier National Park as a backdrop, I spent hours watching Shyanne work, study, walk and move every move: how he walked, the movement of his hands, even the angle of his feet in the stirrups. Much more than the looks, I was prone to say, "Watch closely. You'll miss it."

"Well, of all the problems you could have, that's an easy fix. Meet me in McGinnis Meadows."

That's when Shyanne spoke up, "Well, of all the problems you could have, that's an easy fix. Meet me in McGinnis Meadows."

Buck nodded in agreement, "You couldn't be in better hands, my friend."

Within weeks, I began flying back and forth from my home in Vancouver, and forth from my home in Vancouver.

At the end of the class, I waited excitedly in a long line of people hoping for an autograph, hug, or selfie with Buck, the "horselebity" unlike most, I wasn't just there as a fan; I wanted to be a student—his student when I finally made it to the front of the line, I simply blurted out, "I wan-na be a cowgirl." Buck and Shyanne looked at each other, then laughed. Undaunted, I continued, "But I don't

Like so many life-changing experts, none of what happened next was planned. I was in Seattle, Washington, attending what's referred to as a clinic in the equine world, with the well-known cowboy and horse whisperer Buck Brannaman. I'd wanted to see him in the flesh ever since watching a documentary about his life. The image of him riding his large brown horse, Rebel, across an open meadow hurt that he was the spitting image of my grandfather when he rode. That's when I met Shayne for the first time.

He wasn't hard to miss. Plus, he was the only one there who seemed to be able to do what Buck was teaching.

The relationship my grandfather had with Billie, his own horse, was the stuff of legend in my family. According to all who knew the pair whether chasing coyotes or protecting each other and the livestock, they worked together as one. "It's like they could read each other's minds" my mother would recount. With only an aged black-and-white photo of them together, my grandfather's hood covered in sweat, my grandfather's beard of my bedroom, my childhood hood self knew what she wanted, and I've spent many years chasing a teacher who could help me learn.

I've always loved horses. As a child, I dreamed of being a cowboy. My room was filled with toy horses, horse paintings, and books about horses; the curtains were even hung with wild horse-trion horseclothes. Most of all, and for reasons I've never completely understood, I wanted to be a connection with horses. Maybe it has something to do with my grandfather. Although he died before I met him, he loved horses too, riding a herd of 500 on the open prairies of Saskatchewan.

COWGIRL DREAMS

group, he's also a master of horse-manship and now dedicates his life to teaching others. Jessie is one of many he's worked with over the years, "saving her from the humans" that have so often been the source of trauma and pain.

doing nothing
he'd say,
You'll miss it."

In the meantime, let me come clean about Jessie and Shayne. In case you haven't figured it out, Shayne is not a therapist and Jessie is not his client. The details of the story are true, save two: Shayne is, in fact, a cowboy and Jessie is a horse. Born in Jerome, Idaho, now living in the big sky country of Montana, Shayne is a success-story of my work using a couple of standardized measures. More on that later.

It all made perfect sense to me necessary to better meet their needs." and make whatever adjustments are both validate the client's concerns for them. In turn, the clinician can safe to say what might not be working in which clients feel an atmosphere of the therapist to create capacity of the therapist to the results at the end. It speaks to the on in therapy is associated with early that getting negative feedback shows he said, "the research actually shows Scott stopped me in my tracks.

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Shayne. There's right, declining. In erated when I started working with Shayne. That's right, declining. In ed to decline—a friend that accented to decline, they'd gradually start my noticing, they're startingly slowly tined, the hair on my neck slowly they persisted. As the discussion con-

I have nice peers—which I do—but seemed to flow. My first thought was, its smoothness, how everything just al of my colleagues commented on a clip of one of my sessions, several of for some time. While reviewing a supervision group I'd been a part all came together. I was attending several months passed before it you're lying, so what is it?"

he continued, "And I don't think at this stuff." I froze. Thankfully, lying, or you've become really good ties, "Scott laughed. "Either you're Well, there's only two possible clinical experience.

in effectiveness owing to my growing he was able to rule out any change doing some fancy statistical analysis, both throughout my career. After as I'd been consistently involved with my ruled out training and supervision, began reviewing the prior two years ideas—at least initially. Together, we blinking. Truth is, I didn't have any when began racing my brain. More questions," I slowly replied, and Now it was my turn to pause. "Good if What's changed?"

Scott stayed on point. "So, what is using the tools or entering the data. Instantly, I felt doubt wash over me. Maybe I screwed something up when He continued, "The obvious ques- spired, "Huh."

my only response was an unin- changing my practice hadn't about, yes, two years ago. "And it looks like it all started thing. "Well, the fact is, your scores are improving—a lot." More click- ing reports from different years, he said, "Well, I had no idea what he was seeing. Jumping from best of me once again. I had no idea perhaps my blinking had gotten the best. Then looked some more. I looked. Then looked some more. there's something wrong here."

done with Shayne about my work hors-

being able to stay at your learning that keeps you hungry

"Getting a taste of success is



He watched and responded to the horse's ears, eyes, head, neck, tail, even the angle of his placket. Good therapists try to do the same, noticing the words clients use, their tone of voice, facial expression, and body posture: skills that can be significantly enhanced by monitoring one's performance with measurement tools. Indeed, a brand-new study released by psychologist Jeb Brown confirms that clinicians who use metrics to inform their practice and learning, in time, become more effective than 60 percent of their less engaged peers.

For all that, measurement alone is not enough. We also must work with our data: identifying and responding to problems, soliciting feedback from clients, and making adjustments to improve. Again, that's an attempt to improve. Again, that's what Shayne did, a process that, in time, enhanced my ability to identify, often in the moments, the problem.

of us can't count on our own judgment. The data indicate, for example, our assessments of the quality of the therapeutic relationship often differ greatly from our clients' own evaluations. What's more, we tend to overestimate our own effectiveness—by as much as 65 percent!

Looking back now, it all seems so dear. I was only able to uncover the connection between my improved clinical outcomes and Shanyne's remarkable body of outcome data, which enabled me to see the change in my effectiveness over time. It provided a baseline for comparison. Had I not measured the results of my work, I would've missed it.

The latter concept, responsiveness, refers to doing the right thing at the right time, adjusting interventions in the fly to fit the unique and evolving circumstances of the client and therapist interactions. According to researchers Bill Stiles and Adam Horvath, it's one of the key factors contributing for why certain therapists are more effective than others. How much more effective can one practitioner be than another? Consider this: a 2012 study by Stiles and mouth-to-mouth breathing from individual therapists ranged from 3.5 to 95.6 percent.

bility to pick up on the nuances of interactions with clients. When one well, the people we work with seen, heard, and helped. In other words, we "get" them, know how they feel and what they need. This experience is, as a recent study by John Snyder and George Libbercheck documents, a central component of the therapeutic alliance, the quality of which is one of the strongest predictors of treatment outcome. Not surprisingly, the evidence shows clients who are better at forming stronger bonds.

can find a way to communicate that suits him better." Sure enough, with a few minor adjustments, Lish's ears relaxed, and his expression softened. If you focused on the particular action Shayne took at any given time—missing what's most important in the feedback to recognize and respond to his partner, using moment-to-moment processes: Shayne carefully attended to the technique, so to speak—you risked burnout or, if necessary, heal from prior baggage long enough to stay peaceful and enable the horse to stay connected and result in a lasting attachment and release.

ATTUNEMENT AND RESPONSIVENESS

ATTUNEMENT AND
RESPONSIVENESS

can find a way to communicate that suits him better." Sure enough, with a few minor adjustments, Irish's ears relaxed, and his expression softened. If you focused on the particular action Shayne took at any given time—the technique, so to speak—you risked missing what's most important in the process: Shayne carefully attended to his partner, using moment-to-moment feedback to recognize and respond to any distress. The resulting attachment enabled the horse to stay peaceful and engaged long enough to learn new skills or, if necessary, heal from prior trauma.

critical to edge. It's the fuel for more."

I closed my eyes, remembering one day when Shayne was standing in the arena, next to his horse, lying in the dirt. All of his attention was focused on the horse's ears. "I don't like his expression," he said, explaining that the rotation and angle of the ears signaled frustration or crankiness. "He's not at ease. Let's see if I feel good."

That means self-awareness and self-truth. The fundamentals of horsemanship today is about. We'll be working on barn, let me just remind you what continue, "Before heading up to 'Great.' The room now quiet, I down, waving her arms.

"Here!" now hopping up and "Where?"

cowboy hats, she'd been rendered back of the group. Behind the sea of "Here," comes a reply from the invisible.

"Where's Andre?" I ask.

horses today.

"we probably won't even get on the as he passes across the wood floors, says, his spurs jingling rhythmically riding reassurance. "Don't worry," he riding experience, is busy offering Tom, the participant with the most riding in case of temperament changes. gloves, boots, an extra layer of cloth-

walks Shayne with Trouble, one completing under the weight of wood door swings open, hinges suddenly, the Lodge's massive be no surprises.

day course would unfold so there'd bring him everyone on how the three and dinner. We'd also spent time group in introductions over drinks and activities. Earlier, we'd led the leather chairs, Scott and I are chat-

Nestled into a pair of oversized

sometime you will."

you won't like what you see, and the mirror to your soul. Sometimes hangs on a nearby wall, "A horse is of Buck Brannaman, whose quote way, many will discover the wisdom work together in unison. Along the mal, one that will allow the duo to secure bond with this once-wild ani-

the main lodge. Seated nearby, ining off the stampede in ceiling of burning stove, their reflection bounces flames flicker in the village wood-

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH

atuned, to you.

they really have to know, and be effort and expertise. To succeed, working in this way requires so much on. Such teachers are rare because composition, temperament, and so each individual—their history, body development of "feel" unique to influences, ultimately leading to the international, highly tailored expertise in a process, a series of learned, choosing instead to engage unified. In this, Shayne and Scott were work. In this, Shayne and Scott were finally Attunement.

The only problem is, it doesn't do. Step one. Step two. Step three. Then repeating what the masters did, learn by watching and traditional, our field seeks stain- more effectively becomes possible. It's only from this place that refine- the starting point of attunement. All this means being yourself is be, in whatever field that is.

have the "gift"—whatever that might be the behavior of those who appear to giving into the temptation to copy them forgo their own development, than learned skill. If not that, then that success is more innate talent hence that developing "feel" is an hard, in fact, many aspiring riders give up, concluding after much effort intensely frustrating process. It's so intense that developing "feel" is an I can tell you from personal expe- I accomplished.

coachings by someone who's more by corrective feedback and ongoing stimulate in the dark, informed have to feel your way forward, often used technique or protocol. You have to memorizing the latest treat- shop, attending a weekend work- a book, attending a weekend work- attune doesn't come from reading horses, improving one's ability to colord Peñileton blankets kept star- tered about the room. Others are star- ing blankly out of one of the many windows looking onto the meadow, tall mountain in the distance. You by corrective feedback and ongoing stimulate in the dark, informed have to feel your way forward, often used technique or protocol. You have to memorizing the latest treat- shop, attending a weekend work- a book, attending a weekend work- attune doesn't come from reading horses, improving one's ability to colord Peñileton blankets kept star- tered about the room. Others are star- ing blankly out of one of the many windows looking onto the meadow, tall mountain in the distance. You

find you all that interesting

the first thing I think is,

when someone suggests a client is

by six a.m., Janice, a psychologist from New York, has already led intermediate group members in 30 minutes of yoga. She'd graciously volunteered the night before in an effort to calm jittery nerves. Everyone has eaten, the breakfast spread abundantly of yogurt utensils of choice, a psychologist close to the barn cats, trailing close-

ly behind. "You'll better get your selves into bed," he says, continuing to gaze toward the kitchen. "Morning comes early here."

Despite the silence, the energy horse. Their job? To build a safe and will be paired with a 1,500-pound therapist. In the morning, each on a ranch before. All are psycho- city dwellers and have never been in the group is palpable. Most are teered the the night before in an effort to calm jittery nerves. Everyone has eaten, the breakfast spread abundantly of yogurt utensils of choice, a psychologist close to the barn cats, trailing close-

ly behind. "You'll better get your selves into bed," he says, continuing to gaze toward the kitchen. "Morning comes early here."

different occasions, "There are no shorthands." And, as I've learned from

chairs, are 13 visitors to McGinnis

a hodgepodge of farmhouse wood

spook them and lead to serious injury. Advice notwithstanding, the artwork hanging on the walls, it's the epitome of "glamming".

"The tick to the perfect marshmallow," Tom explains, "is position-to resist. Horses are both percep-

tion to do exactly what is hard to move, instantly reading your ability to hang away at the slightest provocation. Tom had done his best to comply. As a result, his gait had morphed into a kind of determined, high-speed waddle, as he stretched his arms out, halter in hand, trying to spear you round and round the ring to retrieve a new marshmallow. "Yeah, until Shayne yelled at me to take 'em off," Tom interjects, mov-

"And those spurs," Andrea chimed in. "I couldn't see you, but I sure could hear you going round and round the ring. I'm not gonna hurt ya . . ." Ray would have none of it.

sweettalk Ray. "Come here, boy, hold arms out, halter in hand, trying to speed waddle, as he stretched his arms out, halter in hand, trying to spear you round and round the ring to retrieve a new marshmallow. They quickly size you up, instantly reading your ability to move, instantly reading your ability to hang away at the slightest provocation. Tom had done his best to comply. As a result, his gait had morphed into a kind of determined, high-speed waddle, as he stretched his arms out, halter in hand, trying to spear you round and round the ring to retrieve a new marshmallow. "The tick to the perfect marsh-

temptation to do exactly what is hard to move, both percep-

"Unlike you, I think your horse running after the horses. It can

run after the horses. It can

"Unlikely for Tom. I think your horse

was having fun," one participant

remarked, "waiting patiently until

you got close, and then bolting."

"Really? Huh." Andrea replies. "It

"Who knows?" Jamie answers,

"An easy horse?" Tom suggests.

"Beginner's luck, maybe?"

I have no idea how it happened. I was cool, but, you know, honestly,

"Really? Huh." Jamie replies. "It

"You and Chieff connected, like you had some invisible bond or something."

"Right from the start," says Jamie,

"Felt like it," Tom mutters in response, placing his roasting stick

"I think we all know my horse was just sour and grumpy this morning."

"I'm not sure I can eat any more," Jamie replies. "Even if I eat away stands a large, can-

A few feet now dot the night sky.

of local farm-to-table fare. Millions

make s'mores. Our bellies are full

We're seated around a huge firepit, one of the participants remarks,

"I'm not sure I can eat any more," Jamie replies. "Even if I eat away stands a large, can-

"Don't worry," I jump in. "Even if you forget everything we've talked about, you're not alone. We're here

from the morning yoga disappaeing.

"Yikes," Jamie sputters, any benefits

I reply. "I think you'll be shocked at the

level of focus and concentration

"I think you'll be shocked at the

"I think you'll be shocked at the

"Cliché," Scott responds, "but oh

"Attunement starts within," Jamie

hurts," Jamie shares, "I don't feel like I did anything particularly physi-

"I'm not sure why every part of me

but doesn't burn or catch fire."

that chandeliers, indoor heating, and

water, mind you. With three cry-

vas tent. Not the average camping

one of the participants remarks,

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"Interestling way to put it," Des, "Scott responds. "And here again, the evidence shows the same pattern occurs in psychotherapy. A client sees one therapist, and nothing hap-

"I promise you, it wasn't always
that way," Des quickly replies. "I'm
not trying to go all woo-woo on you,
but if you can turn a horse into a
statue, then you can sure as hell do
the opposite and get it to move."

you **see**, and sometimes

Sometimes you won't like what

"A horse is the mirror



The image is a collage of various horse-related elements. At the top, there's a snippet of text from a book or article. Below it is a large, stylized title 'you see, and sometimes you won't like what' in red and black. To the left of the title is a close-up of a horse's eye. In the center, there's a dark vertical bar containing more text. To the right of the title, there's a photo of a horse's head and neck. The background is a light beige color.

With that, everyone turns toward Janice. "Uh, I followed Shayne's instructions exactly, his hand moves less, until he was finally just standing there, like his hooves were locked in what I did, Chaos moved less and concrete, the immovable beast."

Again laughter, increasing when Tom's third marsmallow goes up in flames. "I give up," he says in frustration, casting his roasting stick aside.

"Now, that's an interesting question," Andreia remarks, then goes silent.

"I was at a workshop once with Don Meichenbaum," Scott continues, a winkle in his eye. I've seen it before a guy who's been deemed one of the 10 most influential therapists of the 20th century, and he's talking about how to become a more effective therapist. The first tip he offers-

Jamie's horse had looked so will-
ing and friendly to start. He's one
of the ranch staff favorites, a little
nugget of a guy with one striking
blue eye.

I smile but say nothing, choosing
instead to listen as the group discusses
the day. Ray, Chief, and Chaos are
horses I know well. Each has taught
me important lessons. Ray, for exam-
ple, helped me understand, appre-
ciate, and notice redidness. If you
just put yourself in his line of sight
and wait, he'll walk right to you. The
temptation to chase, exert control, or
impose an agenda is, for most, includ-
ing me, simply too much. And if you
did that with Ray, bang, it was off to
the races and he won every time. His
impact on my work as a therapist
throughout my life was obvious.
I slowed down, worked at containing
my desire to lead or force the pro-
cess. I improved at paying attention
to their needs in the moment, stay-
ing present while waiting for them to
move in my direction.

"And that's super-important, because it means that we're failing, that we need to change how we're working. Set up the tasks differently, break them down even further and provide more concrete guidance and support."

“That thought has crossed my mind
give up, and that's no good.”
“More like it makes Tom likelier to
play makes Tom a dull boy?”
“Smiling, Tom quips, “All work and
those tediums evoke:

"You're so right, Tom," Scott quick-
ly affirms. "Getting a taste of success
along the way is critical to being able
to stay at your learning edge. It's the
fuel that keeps you hungrier for
more, building our tolerance for the
failures that are an inherent part of
deliberate practice, and the feelings
that those failures evoke."

"Oy vey," Tom sighs, pulling his fourt, deeply charred marshmallow from the fire. "I just wish I could find the sweet spot of s'mores." Although his tone is lighthearted, Tom sighs, pulling his fourt, deeply charred marshmallow from the fire. "I just wish I could find the sweet spot of s'mores." Although his tone is lighthearted, no one laughs.

I jump in again. "The key is staying
in that open place as you become
more experienced, to challenge the
automaticity Scots talking about the
expériences that keep you at that
by constantly exposing yourself to

Less to maintain.

"Yeah, that's because they have
edged; " she asks.

"Because they're at their learning than experienced riders."

"Yes," I responded, "and it can be a dilemma when things all seem to fall into place, like they did for you today, Andrea. But I can tell you, your experience is not unusual. In fact, we see it a lot here, because doing better

"Okay," Andrea breaks her silence, "opportunities for altitude measurement." So being able to altitude is not some static state, or fixed skill we'll eventually master. Like Des said, it's an ongoing thing."

"That's the Difficult Conversations Therapy Project, or DCT," Scott randomizes controlled trials done by researchers David Chou, Sharon Lui, and colleagues. And there's other evidence. Norwegian researcher Helene Nissen-Lie, for example, has found professional self-doubt is a strong predictor of outcome and all-around performance. And there's other evidence. Noticing is gained by either redesign or willful ignorance, the type of humble, not-knowing circles. Noticing is gained by either redesign or willful ignorance, the type of humble, not-knowing circles. When what we know for sure is called into question. It's then that our minds are open, the possibility of learning exists, and consequently, when we're most likely to recognize

As Scott delivers the bad news, I'm reminded of another study I've heard him mention before. When therapists are engrossed in deliberation practice, their confidence declines while their actual, measured ability in whatever task they're working on improves.

uses, "Paradoxically, that's also when we cease to improve."

Scott then reminds the group about one of the studies included in the preexisting material for this retreat. Psychiatrist Simon Goldbergs and colleagues tracked the outcomes of 170 therapists for up to 17 years. The results showed neither practitioner effectiveness nor stayed the same, but improved over time.

On the other hand, the results of a study by Dr. Michael H. Sandler and his colleagues at the University of California, San Francisco, suggest that the field has gotten better. In their study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the researchers found that the average physician spent 10 hours a month on the subject to date. Before its publication, the field could hold out hope that hours spent in the trench-and most sophisticated such study and most sophisticated. It's the largest in the field lengthened as experience in actually worsened.

What does this mean for you? If you're a physician who's been practicing for a while, you may be more effective than you were when you first started. But if you're a new physician, you may be less effective than your colleagues. And if you're a physician who's been practicing for a long time, you may be less effective than you were when you first started.

"Yeah," Scott says, "And no deny-ing that process, like you say Tom, can be hard on the ego, especially if you have a lot of experience. As you start learning as that can be, howeve-er, it's natural. Whether learning to drive a car, ride a bike, or do therapy, over time, much of our perfor-mance becomes routine. We achieve what researchers call automaticity, doing without having to think about everything we're doing. Whatever we're engag-ed in becomes smooth-er and with that, our comfort, confidence, and efficiency grows."

Following a brief pause, he contin-ues.

The tuning, and letting the horse guide you about what does and doesn't work along the way, you gradually improve." "D-e-l-i-b-e-r-a-t-e p-r-a-c-t-i-c-e," one of the other participants slowly

„you will.“

to your soul.

The image is a collage of numerous text snippets from the book 'Zen-therapy' by Des Claryhes. The snippets are arranged in a grid-like pattern across the page. The text is in a variety of fonts and sizes, some in black and some in red. One prominent red banner at the bottom right contains the words 'Your Soul.' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The snippets themselves are in a smaller, more varied font. They discuss various themes from the book, including the nature of reality, the self, and therapeutic processes.

Note, learning a new treatment model is not on the list above. The temptation to follow this course of action is understandably hard to resist. As humans, we're always

On a personal level, I've recently taken up boating. I'm sure it'll come as no surprise that avoiding being punched in the face is a great motivator for becoming sensitive to what others are doing, or are about to do! Also, my newly rescued pibull, Loki, and I are taking obedience classes together, using our regularity scheduled walk times to practice and make small adjustments based on his responses. In all, my experience has been that as soon as I start looking at almost any activity will do: music, theater, art, cooking, and dance with the right intention and focus the amount of time I have available.

With the right intention and focus to play with learning soon exceeds the amount of time I have available. In opportunity, the number of opportunities to learn that as soon as I start looking at almost any activity will do: music, theater, art, cooking, and dance can all work.

The “P” is for *playful experiments*. In the words of Miller, Hubble, and Chow, “Think like a child. . . Instead of trying to ‘get it right,’ experiment; instead of focusing on performing, play.” It’s what coming to the ranch instead of focusing on performance, is all about: having the chance to engage in experiences offering lateral

"R" is for reference point. One of the most common challenges people encounter when deliberating practicality is diffusion of effort. Implying that it's easy to get distract- ed and lost, making it hard to see whether progress is being made or not. Returning to your results on an ongoing basis is a powerful anti- dote. In a brand-new study of real- world clinicians, Jeff Brown and Christopher Cazaubelli found aver- age therapists who are engaged in their practice more often than their peers.

ng coffee in the morning, practice needs to be done without having to think or plan.

known by the acronym ARPs.

Third, they have a system of practice-and-reviewing exercises. Scott Miller, Mark Hubble, and Darryl Chow note, "Deliberate practice is not an activity that can be left to chance or choice. Rather, to be effective, it must be the default option." As a way of integrating deliberative practice into one's daily routine, they propose a framework

Of course, each of us exists on a continuum, depending on the context and nature of the learning task. Most intriguing in this regard is the impact that others can have on our minds. In a series of experiments with kids, she and her colleagues showed how a single word can trigger a shift, literally disabling the children in their problem-solving efforts. Awareness of this phenomenon has made us exceedingly mindful of how we develop and execute exercises at the ranch. After all, it's so easy to trip people into focusing on how they're doing and what others think of them—two qualities of a fixed mindset—rather than on what they're learning. Key is distinguishing between people who feel overwhelmed versus uncomforatable, the latter being a sign that they're at their learning edge.

Second, they embody a "growth" perspective, introduced by psychologist Carol Dweck, are simple. The degree to which people believe effort is associated with performance achievement predicts how long they persevere, how much they learn, and what they achieve. Conversely, those who attribute success to fixed qualities (e.g., luck, genetics, talent, level of achievement, or physical capacities) are likely to give up when pushed to their limits more easily.

begin them to monitor the quality and outcome of their clinical work. They were already using the tools, and their interest in mining the resulting data for professional development

We've identified three qualities that appear to characterize those who stick with the process. First, they're more intentional in their efforts to put what they've learned into practice. If they haven't done so before the training, they access the measures Scott developed, and

That said, the ranch is a bubble. The magic that occurs there takes place in isolation. What happens to most after they leave is about what you might expect. On surveys participants complete at the end of the training, nearly all describe the experience as transformative. And yet, some follow through, others struggle, and a handful fall off the radar completely. Given our small, self-selected sample, we can only speculate as to the reasons. What can we say for sure is that desire improves their attitude, respon-

McGinnis Meadows is a little slice of heaven. Time there goes by so quickly. It always seems as though I'm packing my bag to leave only moments after arriving. Part of it, I'm sure, is the fresh air and wide-open spaces. The near total disconnection from the rest of the world also contributes. Cell phones don't work. The internet can be spotty. And there's no TV. Then, of course, like us, they're wired for connection. The purity of that bond is what brings me back again and again, and it's what visitors say is most memorable.

BEYOND THE BUBBLE

Suddenly, Tom gets to his feet.
Embarraté practice:
cannings the group, he asks in his
east southern drawl, "So which one
of you cowpokes is gonna learn me
to roast this marshmella' ry-aht?"

angaged at a level that they could tolerate. At the same time, he fostered a culture of openness and joy when we struggled. "That's where growth starts", he'd say. "It's the heat and potatoes in the stew of life."