

## Riding a Dead Horse

One of the basic requirements of all living organisms is our innate need to grow plants, animals, vegetables, humans and minerals if you follow quantum physics research.

These days, most of us are moving at 90 miles an hour encountering numerous people, places, circumstances and events, guided by to-do lists, held accountable to, and addicted to, electronic leashes, and burdened by overwhelm, stress, fogginess, and confusion.

I recall reading an article recently in which the author talked about how we can maximize our time and I was struck by the last "do and don't" item on her list; simply, it stated: "And finally, when the horse dies, get off!"

What an interesting piece of advice! Blunt and to the point. So I thought I might tug on your sleeve as well and perhaps suggest taking a minute or two, right here, right now, to consider any dead horses you may be riding.

Dead horses are all of the shoulds and shouldn'ts that drive our lives. Often we were completely unaware of them. These dead horses take the form of self-images that we think we need to live up to, beliefs, habits and routines that run our lives; they show up as the relentless demands and expectations we make on ourselves. These dead horses are forever showing up in our jobs, in our lifestyles or in our relationships with friends, co-workers, spouses and partners. And yet, for no apparent reason, we continually find ourselves in states of regret, agitation, anger, irritation, frustration, resentment, defensiveness, sadness and depression as we continue to try and ride our dead horses.

Perhaps right here and right now, you are spending precious time and energy trying to resuscitate your dead horses, painfully and frustratingly dragging them along into today, tonight, tomorrow, next week, next month and next year. We make ourselves believe that if we just try harder, keep on keeping on, these dead horses will come to life, better than ever. Or we tell ourselves that if we are less demanding and more accepting, these dead horses will generate renewed energy and live to ride again.

Or perhaps, we wish, we hope, and we pray that a miracle will happen and our dead horses will suddenly become healthy so we can ride off into the sunset. Just like TV fantasies and fairy tales.

Maybe we're rationalizing that our horse really isn't dead; that all it needs is some good old R&R. So we reject our reality and distract ourselves from the truth of our situation. And after days, weeks, months and years of resisting, rejecting, and distracting ourselves, we're still waiting for the dead horse to show some life, and so we wait, and wait, hope and pray...to no avail.

Then, too, there are those of us who try to convince ourselves that life will be grand if we just carry the horse like it will come out of its coma at some point. So, we just haul it around until life comes back into it. We think that if we nurture it, support it, and help it, it will resurrect. Denial.

Unfortunately, all the while, we do know, yet resist admitting, carrying a dead horse on our shoulders is very tiring, exhausting, debilitating, self-sabotaging and counter-productive.

So, as you contemplate your life right here and right now, this may be a wonderful opportunity to be curious about your dead horses. What are the issues you're facing in your life at home, at work and at play? Are they the same as, or similar to, the dead horses you carried around in 2007, and perhaps in 2006, and in 2005?

Consider your career, your work, your relationships, your health and appearance, your personal or spiritual development, fun, finances, or your personal space.

Consider, perhaps, your lifestyle. Having set out with myriad good intentions, believing in what you thought was your vision or purpose, working hard and sacrificing along the way, becoming who you thought you should be, or perhaps even giving up what you wanted or who you wanted to be, telling yourself there's no going back, no way to extricate yourself from your unhappiness, frustration, discomfort, or stuckness, are you telling yourself a story that if you just stick it out all will be well?

So, staying in denial, and with a false hope, we keep egging our horse(s) on. We dig in our spurs, but move nowhere. Or, we're stuck on a plastic horse on a merry-go-round, moving, always engaged in doing, going around in circles, but in reality, going nowhere. People who ride "dead horses" every day know what they have to do when they get up. But, they have no idea where they're going.

At the end of the day, the bottom line is simply: **when the horse dies, get off!**

A year from today, your life will be different. Guaranteed, it will be different! Whether it is good different or bad different, is your choice. Much depends on whether the horses you're riding are healthy, alive, juicy, energetic, purposeful, meaningful and positively supportive...or dead.

**So, some questions for self-reflection are:**

- In what areas of your life are you disengaged right now?
- What are you doing consistently at work that does not support your performance, productivity or profitability, but keep doing it nevertheless?
- Are you achieving your goals in your life at work, at home or at play? Do you consistently engage in beliefs, thoughts and actions that run counter to effective goal achievement?
- Many folks spend the first half of their life articulating what they're going to do and the second half explaining why they couldn't do it? Are you one of those folks?
- Are you dying a slow death, lacking a vision, direction, meaning in your life, dying a slow death for something you're not willing to die for?
- What stories do you keep telling yourself, what "dead horses" do you keep trying to ride, that do not support a healthy life at work, or a healthy family life, or your health in general or your happiness or your friendships?
- Are you impaired on your job or in your relationships because of a medical, emotional or psychological issue, a "dead horse", that you refuse to resolve?
- Will the "dead horses" you are currently riding end up taking you where you really, really, really want to go in your life?
- Do your "dead horses" reflect the truth of who you really are, or are they carrying an imposter?
- How much physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energy do you spend supporting or trying to resuscitate your "dead horses"?

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