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Article by Brigitte von Rechenberg, DVM:

I wanted to share something I learned about applying Monty's concepts to horses from a veterinarian's standpoint.

Report:

In the last couple of days I had the opportunity to apply Monty's concept to my 3-year old, Arabian Horse with the name of Schasadeh, from a veterinarian and an owner's standpoint. As a veterinarian and a horse owner, I wear both "hats": the hat of the veterinarian, who wants to treat the horse in a straight forward manner (and who wants to move on to the next patient or issue at hand), and the hat of the owner, who doesn't want his horse to get hurt or angered in a way that he would become untreatable for the future. As any other owner, I dread the scenario, where a horse gets panic or becomes aggressive, as soon as it sees a needle, a bandage or any other tool involved in veterinary medicine - and believe me, Arabians don't forget! It takes many months of worship to make them believe that after all, we are not bad owners.

All my 9 Arabians are worked after Monty's concepts - of course just by myself and, therefore, on a lay level. But nevertheless, they know what a Join-Up® is and they know the Dually halter and by working together, they know that they can trust me for whatever we have in mind - although sometimes, we may need a bit longer to do things in a decent manner as many impatient trainers would expect us to fulfill the task!

Schasadeh had a minor wound on his hind cannon bone that I had overseen the evening before. Next morning his leg blew up and we set out for the usual routine with cellulites; clean the wound, put on a bandage and give penicillin shots for 3 days, twice a day. Although it seemed clear to me, this concept wasn't approved by Schasadeh, who didn't want to be cleansed, banded or injected. He lifted his leg as high as he stifle joint and was very quick and proficient to kick sideways, like a cow. He was nice enough to just warn me and not really kick me, stopping short in front of my elbow. The injection art wasn't much better-which also made the option of sedation a questionable solution. As a bone surgeon, I stick to the simple principle for successful surgeries as my first teacher told me: "If you have tried a method twice and it doesn't work, put down your instruments and think about a different approach". This seemed applicable also in this situation with Schasadeh. After a short "think-tool-stop" I decided to try it with Monty's concept. I got the Dually halter, reminded Schasadeh quickly what this was all about by moving him a couple of steps back and forth, and then had my friend working with touching his leg with the bandage, while I controlled him on the Dually halter. Each time, he lifted his leg up when my friend touched him with the bandage roll, the nose band was tightened, as soon as he started to relax, the pressure on his nose band went away. It took exactly 5 minutes until he would allow me to apply the bandage without any further problems. The same procedure was repeated with the needle with the difference that it only took about 2 minutes until he allowed me the slow intramuscular injection without fussing around. At the third day and last day of his injections, I could inject him without the help of my friend on the Dually halter. But then, the story wasn't finished. Probably due to the stress (we also have construction going on at the farm) he came down with an impaction colic on the third day of his treatments. So this time, we needed a "real" equine veterinarian and not just an academic researcher as myself. Now, we were up for taking temperature, given an i.v. sedation and doing a rectal without a stand but in the outdoor riding arena, since the construction noise in his stall would have been counterproductive to our goals to do everything with the same calm principles. Fortunately, the equine veterinarian agreed to the concept of me trying to control Schasadeh's actions just with the Dually halter, without nose or ear twitch. Guess what, we were done with everything in about 10 minutes with Schasadeh not making any fuss, no jumping around and simply being great and behaving like the dream and pride of every horse owner. As of this morning, Schasadeh is doing fine again, his cannon bone looks great, his colic is over and he chases his little friend around the pasture again. Wearing the



hat of the owner, I am just relieved and happy that Schasadeh is healed, has no bad memory about his treatment and still loves me after all. As a veterinarian, once more in my life, I adore veterinary medicine and am simply glad that we could help (no better feeling in life than having successfully treated a patient) - and I find that it is time to introduce Monty's concept in veterinary schools all over the world. In fact, our Veterinary School in Zurich, Switzerland, will be the first, where Monty's concepts of Equus will be an official part of the new student curriculum. I am happy that my great colleagues, Prof. Jörg Auer and Dr. Anton Fürst, are the first Equine Veterinarians at a University to include Monty's concepts in their student training. Yes, and I am also a tiny little bit proud that I was involved in this major step to "make a better life for horses and people", in this case patients and horse owners.

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