

horse sense

equine-assisted leadership and self-mastery at Bishop's Lodge Ranch Resort & Spa

interview by Samantha Schwirck

In 2011, Kelly Wendorf and Wayne Muller launched The Equus Experience with the idea that horses can help people discover inner wisdom and improve leadership and relationship skills. Working with 15 horses at Bishop's Lodge Ranch Resort & Spa, Muller, a therapist, minister, and best-selling author, and Wendorf, a writer and former dressage rider, lead individuals and corporate groups through customized, horse-assisted activities. Participants don't ride the horses; instead, they communicate and play games with the gentle giants to work toward self-mastery, trust, and understanding.



Participants in The Equus Experience's therapy sessions, held at Bishop's Lodge improve their leadership and relationship skills.

Who is the perfect candidate for The Equus Experience?

Muller: We have close relationships with corporate leadership teams, board members, business executives, families, and individuals. We especially like to work with family businesses because they face so many difficult choices as both executives and parents.

Wendorf: Any person with a curiosity for learning more about him- or herself and their relationships is a great candidate. The program is also good for individuals who find themselves at a turning point as well as heads of companies that are in some kind of transition.

Why horses?

Muller: Horses are amazingly sensitive. They can literally read our internal emotional story from 50 yards away. They offer unbiased information about how open or closed we might be in that moment, how we claim our inner authority, when we act from who we really are, and when we are just pretending. Horses feel it all and teach us, in simple, unmistakable ways, things that are simply true about ourselves.

Wendorf: Horses are creatures of prey and they're herd animals, so they have keen socio-sensual awareness. This makes them consummate facilitators—giving us clear, non-judgmental insight into ourselves and the way we move in the world.

Some people say they're big and scary...

Muller: No riding is involved; all of our exercises are on the ground. Growing up in New York, I never rode horses—I rode buses. Horses are still a mystery to me; their size and the sheer magnitude of their presence can feel intimidating. But