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insight



News and Views from the School

Welcome to Issue 30

A special welcome to all our new readers. Tuesday is my insight day. I generally load my laptop into the bike-bag, and cycle in to Mandeville Place in central London (weather permitting), and work for a day on the newsletter. That goofy-looking



Brompton bike folds up in a most ingenious way, but gosh, it's hard work uphill. And unfortunately, going into the city is mostly uphill.

It's fascinating to be in touch with the people contributing articles - I usually meet them, or at least Skype if we're in different countries. It was quite surreal to be talking to Anne, so close to Syria, for her article below.

Insight is now 5 years old - that's 5 years' worth of articles, insights and top tips, from students all around the world. Go to [Schoolinsight](#) for back issues.

Please send me feedback - I'd love to hear your impressions and suggestions.

All good wishes,

Christine Lambie, Editor



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Finding harmony with horses

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Working in a Syrian camp

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in adverse circumstances



Paulette has been a philosophy student in Sydney for a few years. Her relationship with horses changed diametrically when working with a unique horse, Foxy Lady. She had to learn about listening, creating positive energy and working

in harmony with the horse. Now she runs seminars, clinics, corporate days, tours and retreats, passing on what she has learned. She has recently made a film about her approach and her work - watch the trailer.

Horse Attunement

Paulette Evans, Sydney



[See the trailer now](#)

I grew up with horses in the Snowy Mountains of Australia. All the girls rode horses and all the boys rode motorbikes. We used to chase brumbies (wild horses) on horseback, we drove cattle into the high plains and went swimming with the ponies in the dam at pony club. I've always been around horses and I've always loved them. In my late teens I got involved in dressage, and I started breeding warmblood (classification name) horses.

I had a very traditional early relationship with horses. Most horse pursuits use the same type of training, which is pressure-based. Put pressure on the horse until it yields and does what it is told. When it does what it is told, the pressure is taken away. My country upbringing was based around "the horse must show me respect". It wasn't a two-way street. When I moved into the world of dressage, the demands put on the horses and the pace at which we expected them to progress was very intense. It didn't create a feeling of harmony.

Most training methods focus on submission, getting the horse to do what you want them to do. Some methods are more creative than others and some are gentler than others, but the end goal is still the same 'How do I get my horse to give me what I want'. It was always about me, until a very powerful strong-willed mare called Foxy Lady gave me no choice but to listen. Foxy is a blessing. She arrived in my life to facilitate positive change for horses and people.

What is 'attunement'?

It's about working in harmony and inspiring responsiveness with the horse, fostering a positive energy between you and the horse. A very important element of what we do and what makes Ribbleton Attunement different from most other horse training is that our focus is on 'What's in it for the horse?' If you change your focus from 'What can I get from my horse?' to 'What's in it for my horse?' then our horses also benefit from the interaction. This is why our horses are waiting at the gate for training. They want to learn, they know that we won't push them beyond what they can handle and we will follow their lead. We listen.

What sort of clients do you work with?

It's often a particular horse that leads a person to look for other ways to relate to horses. People will meet a horse that doesn't agree with being dominated all the time - a horse that is prepared to stand up for itself. Usually, these horses are sold and moved on or sometimes even worse. But sometimes the person decides to try a different way. That's what I did, and that's what a lot of my students and clients have done now. Like Foxy Lady, some horses have a very big voice. They are yelling at us to listen.

A lady in Perth, Western Australia, bred a horse just like this. From a very young age, this horse insisted that respect was a two-way street. Nothing this lady tried would work, because all the methods were based on submission. Over the years, this horse became dangerous but her owner was determined to find a path of harmony. When I met them both the change didn't happen overnight. The trust had to be earned. The lady had to do a lot of listening before this horse softened its outlook. I have so much admiration for horses like this. There are not many of them. Most horses don't like to fight; they just submit and lose their sense of self. The horses that are willing to fight for their rights are here to create great change in the world for their fellow horses.

What is the effect of this work?

If you change your focus to listening and understanding what the horse is saying, your relationship becomes one of harmony. It's no different to our human-human relationships. The horse is then happy, and they are willing and inspired to learn. They trust you and they want to be with you. The impact on your relationship can be quite extraordinary. It's true joy!

Is everyone able to communicate with a horse like you do?

Experience with horses isn't necessary with our work - I teach and consult with people who've never ridden before. In fact, I often find the people who have no experience find it much easier. They come in with a natural respect and politeness for the horse. They are often able to tap into their intuition a lot faster because they don't have so many judgments or perceptions of how it should be. It's really beautiful to watch.

A good example is the corporate mindfulness days we run. Many of these people have never interacted with horses before. I begin by helping them to understand what mindfulness is and show them how to tap into their senses rather than their logic (thinking). We then walk through our herd without any expectations. Because of our horses' upbringing they are very communicative. Different horses approach different people and each interaction is very unique and feels like it has a clear purpose. After the exercise I am

always amazed at the insights people take away. Many describe it as life-changing.

How has your time in the School influenced your work?

The School has had a marked impact on my understanding of myself and the way I work with students. I remember the first term on wisdom; I would leave the evenings saying to my husband, 'This is what I do, this is how I am with the horses - but it is put into words'. Before the School I really struggled to teach concepts like 'oneness', 'give to get', 'being vs. becoming' and so much more. These concepts are critical to finding harmony with our horses (and humans). The really beautiful part of my work is seeing how these learnings and changes in the students flow into their personal lives. I feel very honoured to do this work.

How do you see this work going forward?

We have just completed a documentary film called 'Living the Horse'. This film has been created to facilitate positive change. It's an inspiring film that will hopefully have people thinking about what is most important to them in their lives. We will be involving animal welfare groups all over the world to help facilitate this change and to support them along the way. It's very exciting!

How do you feel after a session with one of your horses?

Over the years I have gotten better at staying in the moment when working with my horses. When I am able to do this, my intuition becomes alive and guides me with the horses. I am able to read and understand what they are sharing with me and because of this, I can respond in a way that makes sense to the horse. When I am able to work from this place of being present, I finish each session feeling such great happiness, peace and love. I feel this from the horses as well. I think back to the days of competing and always looking at what we could become. Now I spend my time being with my horses and I feel what we accomplish is so much more significant for us all. It's magic!

Visit Paulette's website, [Ribbleton](#) and [FaceBookRibbleton](#)
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Top Tips: recommended by readers

1. **Queen Elizabeth II** Celebrate her 90th birthday with events in May and June. Go to the Royal Family's wonderful website: [Royal](#). She's 90 but her family line extends for nearly 1000 years. Watch the Royal [Family Tree](#).

2. **Shakespeare** It's 400 years since the death of the world's most famous playwright. Find out more about him at



[The Bard](#). Struggling with the archaic language? - help is here: [No Fear Shakespeare](#) for translations of popular plays.

3. Plato's Cave Watch an illustration of this famous analogy on UTube: Go to [Plato's Cave](#).

4. Art in Action Last chance to visit this wonderful show as it will close after 2016. Come and visit or volunteer on July 14-17. DON'T MISS [Art in Action](#).

The Distance Learning programme has people from all over the world attending classes; students only need to have an internet connection and a computer. One of the most unusual student situations is Anne's - working in a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan, just across the border from Syria. She enrolled in the economics course last autumn.



Working for a Refugee Camp

Anne Rapin, Jordan

I am American, originally with a background in biotechnology. After happily working in a research lab for a few years I found myself with a touch of wanderlust. A few jobs later, I decided it was time to learn how to network and see if I could actually go overseas to work in public health.

Just as Obama was thinking about dropping bombs in Syria in late 2013, I accepted a job working with Syrian refugees in Za'atari Refugee Camp a few kms south of the Syrian boarder. At the time, Za'atari was the second largest refugee camp in the world with around 100,000 people in an area a little over 3 km sq, and it had a tough reputation for protests, vandalism and violence.

Was I crazy?

I was to be managing two large programs: one promoting good hygiene behaviors to prevent hygiene-related illnesses and the other to mobilize the community around water, sanitation and social issues. My family and most of my friends thought I was crazy and they seemed to feel that I was abandoning them in accepting the job. When I paused to think about it, I had some serious doubts about myself as well. I had never done anything remotely close to the scale of this new job. I didn't speak Arabic and I knew very little about the Middle East and the Syrian crisis. And I was distancing myself from a wonderful, loving husband. On the other hand it wasn't even a decision; it felt like what I

was supposed to do. And deep down I knew that if I didn't, I would always wonder about the path not taken.

So I moved to Jordan. I lived in a small town 10 km outside the camp. I spent 6 days a week in the camp and many hours outside of that working to contribute to strategies, responding to questions, trying to start new projects and partnerships with other organizations in the camp, learning how budgets work and dealing with bizarre HR situations. I was responsible for an unbelievable amount of work as it turned out I was actually replacing two people. And then my boss got seriously ill and named me as officer in charge. I was stressed a lot. I grew and changed a lot. I had to figure out how to handle so many things that I had no idea about in the moment. And, I loved it!

My teams for those two programs were a mix of Jordanians and Syrians. I was challenged but eventually accepted by most of them. They invited me for lunch and tea in their homes both inside and outside the camp. Some of the Syrians started to share their stories from the war with me. We all shared in the struggles of the camp together; freezing temperatures and flooding in the winter. The people in the camp had decided not to use public toilets and instead built makeshift pit latrines which drained to the open ground, so flooding is not just muddy storm water - it is mixed with all the raw sewage. Rodents outnumbered refugees, there were scabies and lice outbreaks, dust storms, heat, and not enough water in the summer.

Refugees rightfully protested about conditions but at the same time seemed to undermine everything the aid workers tried to do to correct the situation. Tensions rose and fell with the battles going on in Syria. People on my teams would find out in the middle of the day that the families they left behind had just been killed in a bomb explosion. I watched them pick each other up and become each other's new, replacement families and my new brothers and sisters.

After about 9 months, I was poached by my current boss. It was an agonizing decision to leave those teams that I had become so integrated with, but at the same time the new boss was offering the mentorship I craved and guidance I needed. Much of the work was to be the same except on a smaller more controlled scale and I would be officially responsible for some of the bigger picture things like negotiating with one of our big donors for program funding. So I made the switch.

I still work a lot but I also get a good part of most weekends off. I live in Amman now and commute 90 mins each way to the camp every day. But I can be outside in some areas after dark, I can go to a nice grocery store for food and occasionally I have time to go out to dinner and even a movie! Those are small things but they are a considerable help in maintaining balance and managing stress. I am a little less connected to the Syrians but more connected to the Jordanians so I'm embedded in another new culture with a different world-view to explore.

My contract will finish at the end of March. I'm trying to figure out the next step. I know I am exhausted in the camp. My boss offered to let me open some projects in the recently liberated (from Daesh/ the un-islamic state) areas in Kurdistan or to help me get a job with another

organization. I'd really like to go to Kurdistan but my mother is really uneasy about the idea. So we'll see what comes next.

Economics online

There is a lot I have never really understood about money and the class helps me understand some of those concepts. But more importantly it provides me with an alternative way to think about the social and economic structures around me, and how they are interconnected in ways I didn't expect. I also enjoy thinking about what we discuss in class while I am witnessing the conversion of a refugee camp as it struggles to become a city. The natural laws suddenly seem evident as people jockey to have the things that they need and want - including better incomes so they can improve their standard of living. I enjoy our class because it helps me understand economics from a broad view and because it helps me see how I fit into the world.



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Reader Feedback

As always, thanks for reading!

*Just love reading Insight. Thank you so much. It is heart-warming. And of course, Lily is a favourite... I now believe dogs can talk...Lots of love, **London***

*Thank you for continuing to send us Insight- it's always a high point to open one's Inbox and see it among the emails of business and advertising! **Madrid***

*As usual - really good! Especially Lily of course. A great idea to have this once a term. Please tell Arthur Farndell how interesting it is to hear of the mechanics of the fabulous Ficino books of letters. But don't tell Isabel Woods that we have a more sceptical and rather too close a view of the subject of many not-too-legal immigrants. Another great issue. **Dover, Kent***

*Just to say that it was very satisfying to be back receiving Insight and so refreshing to have something uplifting arrive in the inbox! **London***



Oliver trained originally as an electrician, but in 1977 he lost his eyesight in a car accident. Friends remark that Oliver has an encyclopaedic knowledge on a huge range of subjects. They sometimes wonder who has the sight!

Oliver still lives in the house in which he was born in the 1950s; it's a rural area, full of dairy cattle, beef and sheep. His dog, Wag, in the photo, is not a trained guide dog but accompanies Oliver on his walks.



Finding Contentment

Oliver Houlihan, Limerick, Ireland

When the accident happened, I was driving at around 20 mph. I was distracted for a moment - I looked left and must have pulled the steering wheel to the right. The car struck a steel pole and a wall. I couldn't get out. I was trapped in the car and I was afraid the car would burst into flames - I had to get out through the windscreen. So I climbed out and stepped onto the street . . . and I couldn't see; there was blood everywhere. But I was so happy. Happy I had my life. And life is beautiful.

But I had lost my sight. I have no regrets. And actually I'm not living in hope for some medical development to regain some eyesight. I lost total sight in one eye at the time of the accident, and 7 years later the sight in the second eye was gone. So I was totally blind. Of course I lost my job and the ability to drive. My participation in sport was also no longer possible, but reading was the greatest loss.

I continued working with my friend Mike, while I still had some sight, contract work, plumbing, mechanical engineering and electrics - anywhere we could get work, we did it. My brother is a car mechanic, so I was always occupied, sometimes working for him too. I have an electronic colour identifier for discerning the colours of electric cables. This enables me to do most electrical work, and I have developed through practice a fine-tuned ability to work with my hands, even in the most intricate places. There are also fantastic modern pieces of equipment such as drills, cutters etc. which allow me to do very precise work.

Joining the School

1979-83 was not a great time. I was feeling a bit sorry for myself. I felt there had to be more to life than what I was experiencing and participating in. At that time I used to go to the pub quite a bit. But I wanted to stop the circulating chats there - those conversations weren't advancing, not approaching what is underlying everything.

It was actually through Mike's wife that I heard about the School of Philosophy. I'd heard many times about Philosophy lectures as I used to do child-minding for them. I wasn't that taken with the idea at first. Eventually I came along to a lecture and I was really smitten. Two weeks later, in Sept 2003, I joined the school. I took up meditation around 14 months later.

Tutoring in the School

I've been a tutor in the school since 2008, in Limerick, on Monday nights. I get the material sent to me. I have this wonderful machine, a scanner which reads the material to me. Of course it can't quite decipher any Sanskrit words, although it tries! It's really fantastic, I love tutoring.

The School is a godsend. I've become a more peaceful person. I have a feeling of light when I meditate - it's a pure light, and the calmness is incredible. When I joined the School I made a whole new set of friends. I look forward to attending the residential weeks and weekends in Townley Hall. I also learn and recite Sanskrit verses by telephone four mornings a week with my friend Michael who is also in the School. We both enjoy this greatly.

Key to contentment

My neighbour is a sheet metal worker and fortunately I have been able to work with him. It's not too difficult to work with modern machinery. My brother is a car mechanic, and under his watchful eye I have also been able to mechanically and electrically repair vehicles. My young neighbour, Jessica, is here at the moment and we have been kept busy. We are dry lining and insulating the house.

I have a braille measuring rule for measurements but can use all other tools such as drills, screws, hammer and nails, saws, planes, chisels, wood chisels etc. I also have an orchard with twelve varieties of apples. I also harvest my own fuel which is peat from the bog. This I do with my brother and some friends. I have no problem with occupying my time. There's never a moment of boredom. I participate in life as much as possible. Occupying the mind is key to achieving contentment.

For me, I know the contour of the land. It is very peaceful and I know the people in the area. There is a beautiful hill walk that I can do every day without worry about traffic. I am in the midst of nature at its best. Life has taught me always to expect the unexpected. It throws many obstacles and curves in your way. Some you can change but many you cannot. Acceptance of what you cannot change is the key to contentment.

Philosophy has given me great peace and I have learned that people are a great source of solace. I wish peace and goodwill to the School of Philosophy worldwide.

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Lily is the black labrador who lives with Donald Lambie, the leader of the School and his wife, the editor. She has become a popular contributor to this newsletter, with her own canine insights.

Letter from Lily

So that's a photo of me on my Easter holiday. Gosh it was fun. West Wittering Beach (funny name I know - it's on England's south coast) with miles and miles of sand and sea - my total favourite. It was a fairly cool day at 14C so there was only one picnic (not ours) on the whole beach. But with nifty footwork and a lightning snatch, I got a sandwich. So how's that for enterprise and athleticism? It's funny - My People didn't quite see it that way.



So here's a question for you - what is the greatest invention of the last 100 years? Steam turbine? Nah. The internal combustion engine? Well, I grant a car has its uses, like for getting to the beach, but nooooo. It's the Ball Thrower. Wow - whoever invented that - they deserve a place in heaven, for ever. A dear friend in America sent me an awesome orange one. Actually My People moan that I get over-excited

with it. So what's wrong with that? And who wouldn't get enthusiastic when the world's greatest invention comes out on a daily basis just to serve 'moi'?



Awwww

Love and licks,
[Lily](#)

Now, did you see that? The first reader's reply above saying 'I now believe dogs can talk'. Yay, at last. Of course we can talk. But can you hear us? So here's the second quiz question. Watch the video, and figure out what the wise old dog is saying. We dogs are talking all the time - just try listening!