

Speaker 1 ([00:00:12](#)):

You are listening to the Journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick is a horseman trainer, international clinician, and author who helps empower horse people from all over the world with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets needed to create trusting partnerships with their horses. Warwick offers a free seven day trial to his comprehensive online video library that includes hundreds of full length training videos and several home study courses@videos.warwickschiller.com.

Warwick Schiller ([00:00:45](#)):

Good day everyone. Welcome back to The Journey on podcast. I'm your host, Warwick Schiller, and have we got a special guest for you this week? My guest on the podcast this week is Linda Koan of, if you're not aware of who Linda is, I'll read you a bit of her bio here. Linda is an author, speaker, riding instructor and horse trainer. She's best known in the field of equine facilitated psychotherapy and the author of five books, the DAO of equ, A Woman's Journey of Healing and Transformation through the Way of the Horse Riding Between the World, expanding Our Potential through the Way of the Horse Way of the Horse, equine Archetypes for Self-Discovery, the Power of the Herd, a non predatory approach to social intelligence, leadership, and innovation, and the five roles of the Master Herder, a revolutionary model for socially intelligent leadership. Linda's books have been used for text and university courses across the country and have received appreciative reviews in publications as diverse as Horse and Rider Natural Horse, the Institute of Noetic Sciences, review, shift Spirituality and Animal Wellness, the Equestrian News and Strides, which is the magazine that's published for the North American Writing for the Handicapped Association.

([00:02:02](#)):

Many courses in equine assisted therapy have her books as essential reading. For example, in the uk, one of the growing number of equine facilitated psychotherapy organizations. I f cites her books throughout their teaching. So among her numerous lectures through the U S A in California, she was a presenter at the 2001 N A R H A conference and was the keynote speaker at the 2003 N H A R H A conference. She was also featured presenter at the 2004 International Transpersonal Conference. So Linda is one of the, if you think about it, she's one of the very first people that took horses and psychotherapy and spirituality and combined them all together. I've known of her for years, I've read the DA of Quis, and it was such a pleasure to have her on the podcast to chat with her, get to know her, and have her tell her story. Linda Hanoff, welcome to the Journey on podcast.

Linda Kohanov ([00:03:12](#)):

Thank you, Warwick. It's great to be here.

Warwick Schiller ([00:03:14](#)):

This is going to be exciting. You probably don't know very much about me at all, but I've been a horse trainer for 30 years and sometime during that time, horses kind of led me down like a bit of a spiritual path, a bit of a personal development slash spiritual path, and you are like one of the, you are og, you're one of the original gangsters of that genre, and I'm interested to talk about how that all came about. So where were you born?

Linda Kohanov ([00:03:48](#)):

I was born in Youngstown, Ohio. It's near Cleveland.

Warwick Schiller ([00:03:52](#)):

Okay. Yep. Did you have horses from a young age?

Linda Kohanov ([00:03:57](#)):

No, my parents were afraid of them, and so I was obsessed and I swore I knew every Christmas I was going to get a pony, but of course they didn't fulfill that desire. But what I would do is I would sneak out and go through the woods and there was an old horse trainer's farm through the woods, and I would be able to get into the back of the property and I would actually find horses that were amenable to being ridden. And it was a transient herd because he was a horse trader. And so I would lure certain horses over to the fence and get on them and ride around bareback. I mean, it was insane. My parents would've been so much better off. I would've been much safer if they had actually gotten me even some riding lessons because to be with horses, I was out going crazy with these horses and the guy would catch me once in a while and chase me off the property and I'd be back two days later sneaking around jumping on his horses. So yeah, that was my experience with horses when I was younger.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:58](#)):

Where'd you go to college?

Linda Kohanov ([00:05:00](#)):

I went to Miami University in Ohio and I was a music major.

Warwick Schiller ([00:05:04](#)):

Oh, really. So tell us about that. So what was your goal to being a music major? What were you planning on doing with that?

Linda Kohanov ([00:05:12](#)):

That was a total accident. I know it was a happy accident, but my parents, because they didn't want me to be with horses, they had me taking music lessons. So I took piano and viola and I ended up doing really well in that. And I went to Miami University, I was going to be an environmental education major, and I just decided to try out for the orchestra just so I could keep playing for fun. And they offered me a full scholarship if I would be a music major. And I remember telling my parents this over dinner after I came back from college at least the time where you go and you out what classes you're going to take and get oriented. And I just said, yeah, and here's the funny thing is that they told me they'd give me a full scholarship if I was a music major and I just kind of snickered and they looked at me with these wide eyes and they were like, oh, Linda, please just for a year be a music major.

([00:06:15](#)):

And so I decided to be kind of a double major. So I took the science classes as well as the music classes that first year. I was extremely ambitious and full of energy and I found out that I really loved music and it was really studying also music theory, studying music theory and the physics of sound. For me, it was like studying chemistry with soul. And so I decided to stay a music major and I ended up getting into radio and being a classical and jazz radio announcer for many years and a music critic. I was a music critic for many years. And so in a way it was really good that I took that route. I also studied composition and things like that, and it was good because it caused me to learn how to listen to things that are beyond words and pay attention to things that are invisible to most people and write about those things.

[\(00:07:17\)](#):

And it's kind of a quandary to learn how to write about things that are beyond words. But being a music critic helped me to learn how to do that. And so when I was in my thirties and I moved to Tucson, Arizona with my husband Steve Roach, he's a Grammy nominated recording artist and composer. So we moved out here and I was a music critic and I was working at the local radio station. I was the morning classical announcer and people were driving me insane. All of the music people I was interviewing, all the famous musicians, they were a little bit crazy. And then the people at the radio station where I worked, this was part of a university communications department. They didn't know how to communicate very well at all. And so we had all of the, most of the people I knew were suppressing emotion, and yet I was interacting with a large number of people who were paid handsomely for expressing emotion.

[\(00:08:16\)](#):

And what I found was suppressing emotion and expressing emotion were two sides of an incredibly dysfunctional coin. I just thought, people are driving me crazy. I have to get out of here. And so living in Tucson, Arizona, in the desert, you can have a horse. You don't need barns and things like that. I mean, they prefer to be outside in large corrals. And so I decided to get a horse in order to get away from people as much as I could on a regular basis just to renew myself. But when I was with the horses, a whole new world opened up to me and I began to see that they were tuning me to become better balanced physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. I know that you've had this experience too work and they opened something up inside of you that invigorates your spirit, and I know that has happened to you as well.

[\(00:09:12\)](#):

And so it really was a transformational experience to be with horses as an adult because all of a sudden I could pay attention to things that I think I would've been completely unconscious about as a child, but learning how to be engaged with a horse in a productive way as an adult was quite an adventure and I was taking notes on it and I also knew how to pay attention to and talk about things that were beyond words. And so all of those things came together in causing me to take this journey of writing now five books about what horses have to teach humans about becoming better people.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:09:54\)](#):

Wow. It sounds like you had a bit of an education in perception from the music before you got to the horses. So it's so much like the music set you up, the music and being a music critic and all that other stuff set you up to be in a space to where you could actually step in with the horses and take the next step of your journey. Would you say that

Linda Kohanov [\(00:10:20\)](#):

True? Absolutely. And also when you play in ensembles, whether you're playing in a rock band or a jazz combo or a string quartet or a symphony, you're actually communicating with others and you're learning how to harmonize with them, and you're learning how to move through mistakes as a flow because, and you're also learning how to experience and express. In the case of music, you really do express draw emotions, but you learn how to do that without dissociating or losing contact with everyone around you because if you're listening to a piece of music like Nikola is one that always brings tears to my eyes, and there's just these swells of emotion and you have to really stay present during those swells of emotion. As a violist, you have brass behind you that literally causes your entire body to vibrate when you're sitting in an orchestra. And so you're taking in this intense somatic input and your

whole body's vibrating and you're playing with others and you're having to stay present because if you get too excited about the music, the bow flies out of your hand and hits the conductor and he falls off the podium or whatever, and the whole thing comes to a crashing halt.

(00:11:44):

So you actually learn how to be present in the midst of strong, positive and strong intense emotions like fear or anger or a deep longing, sad second movement, and a sprightly third movement and a powerful final movement. So what you're learning is a huge amount also of emotional agility and all of those things really come into play when you're working with horses.

Warwick Schiller (00:12:11):

Wow. Yeah. You just said something that I've only just become aware of. You're talking about sitting in front of the brass and that somatic experience. So I have spent most of my life in a bit of a dissociative shutdown type state. So I've had no, nothing going on in my body in the last probably three or four years. I've been doing a lot of different things and it's getting more and more. And here a little while ago, it occurred to me why people go to raves with that music because oh, it hits you in the body. You feel it in your body and especially the bass, you know what I mean? And I had never, ever, I'm a bit old for the rave scene, so it never occurred to me why they like to do that. And I realized, oh, it's this somatic thing, but I've been to concerts and loud music didn't even resonate in me. There was really nothing going on in there. Now look at my dog makes me vibrate, so you know what I mean?

Linda Kohanov (00:13:25):

But

Warwick Schiller (00:13:26):

Yeah, when you said you're in front of the brass and it's that energy going through you and that somatic experience, I'm like, oh, yeah, I get it. Yeah, that's cool. There's something else I wanted to ask you about because for me, it seems that the more of a spiritual journey I go on and I see other people go and the more connected to everything around them people become. And a big part of that is connecting with nature and realizing just how much nature communicates with each other. If you've read the secret life of trees or any of those sorts of things, and you said you wanted to be environmental education in environmental education, what was that about? What were you hoping to do there?

Linda Kohanov (00:14:19):

Environmental education is taking science back into nature. And so what you're really doing is learning how to be in nature and how to be receptive to nature. So if you're in that kind of education, you're taking people out in nature and having them really learn how to pay attention and listen to nature and to protect nature. Environmental education has a quality of environmental protection to it as well. But I think one of the biggest misconceptions people have over and over and over again in our culture is that nature is stupid and that nature is cruel, that it's a doggy dog killer be killed world out there. And that's just one small side of nature where you have predators that keep life in balance with the available resources. If we didn't have lions and tigers and hyenas, large herbivores would eat all the available grass and they die long slow death from starvation.

(00:15:25):

Are you from Australia? Yeah. Okay. So when I was in Australia a few years ago, they were talking about how all the kangaroos were overrunning the wilderness areas outside of, I guess it was outside of

Melbourne and Sydney. And I was like, well, several of the people I stayed with were upset because these kangaroos were coming in and eating all the grass for their horses, and it was getting overrun with kangaroos. And I'm like, well, what happens with that? And they said, the kangaroos don't have any natural predators other than men and women, I guess. And so that was very interesting to me. That's why I guess you have people going out and hunting kangaroos and you can order kangaroo steaks in restaurants in Sydney, Australia because it is part of an effort to keep the kangaroo population in balance because in certain areas they were saying that the kangaroos were eating the available food and that they were dying these long slow deaths from starvation.

(00:16:28):

So predators are an important element of keeping life in balance, but that's not the only element. I mean, I was so excited to find out there was a book written in 1902 by this Russian prince, by the name of Peter Kin, and the book is called Mutual Aid, a Factor of Evolution. And in this book he talks about how he lived in Darwin's time and he got really excited about Darwin's theory of natural selection and evolution. And he was a Russian prince. He was very well educated, had a lot of time and money on his hands. So what he did was he commandeered a group of 50 horses and 10 sacs, and he headed out across the Australian, or not the Australian, the Siberian Outback. And he was going to collect examples in nature to support Darwin's theories. And at that time, Darwin's theories were already being co-opted by really aggressive human forces like royalty or like Robert Baron style capitalists that were really activated at that time.

(00:17:37):

And they were all saying, yeah, Darwin's theory justifies a kind of social evolution, like if I'm rich and powerful, then I deserve to actually as an evolutionary force to subjugate all these other people underneath me and take advantage of them. That's what it is. It's a dog eat dog world, but that's actually not what Kerak can found. He actually found that mutual aid was as much or more of a factor in having a species really thrive than competition for limited resources mentality. He also talked a lot about competition avoidance in nature. Now, when you were growing up and you were studying evolution, did your teachers talk about competition avoidance in nature?

Warwick Schiller (00:18:25):

No. The thing is, when the whole schooling system is based on capitalism and colonialism, you get told one view of the world, which, and it makes sense if that's your view of the world, you can find evidence to support that, and then you just tootle along with life with that. But yeah, after a while you get to realize, hey, that's one lens. You can look at things through when it highlights all the things in that lens, but it doesn't highlight the other stuff. But if you, I'm a huge fan of Wayne Dyer. When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change and yeah, no, they didn't. There's a lot of stuff they didn't teach us in school.

Linda Kohanov (00:19:14):

And if you think about it, this evidence is all around you. I mean, competition avoidance. When bears hibernate for the winter, that's competition avoidance behavior, and it's supported by hormonal changes that makes the bears and skunks and other animals that hibernate. It makes 'em really drowsy. I had a really good childhood friend who had a pet skunk, and every winter that skunk would hide in the pots and pans in the dark under the kitchen sink because the skunk, even though she was living in a very warm artificial environment inside, she still had a hormonal response that caused her to be incredibly drowsy for about three months. So if we wanted to play with her, we would pull her out of a pot in the

back of the sink underneath the sink, and we would play with this really drowsy animal that just looked like she had no bones.

[\(00:20:09\)](#):

She was just falling asleep with everything you were doing. So the fact that nature creates hormonal shifts that encourage competition and avoidance is significant. And there's another really big hormonal shift that happens in nature that encourages reaching out to others over a kind of cutting off contact. So nature is also about connection and contact with others, and there's a hormone that's released called oxytocin in all mammals, and oxytocin buffers the flight or fight response in favor of a calm and connect response, and it increases learning capacity as well. And so nature has hormones for competition avoidance, it has hormones for connection, it has hormones to buffer the fight or flight response in favor of connection. And so there's other things that we're seeing. Now, I know that you talked with Dr. Rebecca Bailey a few weeks ago, and she and I have been working on a modality called connection focused therapy.

[\(00:21:19\)](#):

And it has, it's informed in part by a new theory called the polyvagal theory. And the polyvagal theory actually explains a lot about what horses are capable of and why they're capable of helping us, for instance. But the polyvagal nervous system in all mammals actually is an innovation in the nervous system that obliges us to connect with others in order to feel safe and for the nervous system to grow and operate in an optimal level. So this idea of the lone wolf, or I'm just going to strike out on my own, or I'm done with people, I am going to move to a desert island. We all feel like that sometimes, right? Your polyvagal nervous system actually makes it so that in order to reach your full potential, you have to connect with others. And so nature's about connection, it's about mutual aid, it's about competition avoidance, and yes, there are predatory elements in nature to keep life in balance, but that's one small part of what nature's all about. So I just have always felt, and now we have a lot of scientific information to back it up, that nature has both benevolence and also intelligence.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:22:42\)](#):

Oh, most certainly. So we are on, this is like episode 100 and maybe five or something of my podcast, but episode number two was called the Science of Connection. And so episode number one, it was called changes. And I, today I going to do podcast, or excuse me, I'm going to do a podcast, but I'm going to talk about, I now view the world completely differently than I had a few years ago. And I talked about things that have happened that facilitated that. But episode number two was called the Science of Connection. And I had been doing things with horses for a while that was out of the ordinary from what most horse trainers do with horses. And it seemed me working and I had no idea why it was working. And then I discovered polyvagal theory and polyvagal theory explained why the little things I was doing was working. And yeah, that led me down a whole rabbit hole of all sorts of things. You were talking about animals cooperating and like I mentioned the book, the Secret Life of Trees Before, and the trees communicate with each other. Sometimes they will poison other trees, but sometimes they will feed other trees in that book. They talk about finding when they've been felling trees in the forest and they'll find a stump, they're still alive. Well, it's got no way to photosynthesize, it's going to leaves, it can't feed itself, and the other trees around it are feeding it. Have you ever heard of a book called What Do Animals Think by Carl Sina?

Linda Kohanov [\(00:24:21\)](#):

No, I haven't heard of that book. It's

Warwick Schiller ([00:24:23](#)):

Called Beyond. I'm

Linda Kohanov ([00:24:23](#)):

Interested immediately beyond

Warwick Schiller ([00:24:25](#)):

Words what animals Think and Feel. I'm reading it right now, Chris and McDonald's and Mark Rashid's wife recommended it to me. And I think it's one of those books like There's Life before Reading that book and Life after reading that book. But the book is about whales, wolves, and sorry, elephants, wolves, and then whales. I think. I haven't got to the whale part of it yet, but the whole part about elephants and just how such a highly evolved social creature they are, it's pretty amazing. Now you were talking about the skunk and the hibernating thing before.

Linda Kohanov ([00:25:02](#)):

Yes.

Warwick Schiller ([00:25:06](#)):

I messaged this to my therapist a couple of days ago because we had a talk about winter and things like that. But listen to this, plants and animals don't fight the winter. They don't pretend it's not happening. And attempting carry on living the same lives that lived in the summer, they prepare, they adapt, they perform extraordinary acts of metamorphosis to get them through. Winter is a time of withdrawing from the world, maximizing scant resources, carrying out acts of brutal efficiency in vanishing from sight. But that's where the transformation occurs. Winter is not the death of the lifecycle, but it's crucible.

Linda Kohanov ([00:25:41](#)):

That's beautiful. Where did you get that? Did you write that?

Warwick Schiller ([00:25:45](#)):

No, no, I didn't write that. It's by Catherine May from a book called Wintering, the Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times. Oh,

Linda Kohanov ([00:25:53](#)):

Nice.

Warwick Schiller ([00:25:54](#)):

But the more I get into all sorts of weird and wonderful stuff, the more I realize that, oh, the answers are in nature. We just go about, we didn't evolve to live the way we live these days. We haven't evolved much in, if at all, I dunno, in the last 10,000 years since we're kind of hunter-gatherers, we are in a hunter-gatherer body, not living a hunter-gatherer life and living in groups and from the little things like co-sleeping with our children and all that sort of stuff. And I think for me and for people I associate with, I think the horses are an introduction. Or in order to get along with horses, you have to be able to understand nature, but you have to be able to, it's not about that survival of the fittest thing that you talked about before. And if you have that mindset, you will have some trouble with horses. You will,

[\(00:27:03\)](#):

And you will have to come up with techniques to get through that trouble, which probably brings you just more trouble. But at some point in time, I think if you spend long enough time around horses, you finally get to where you realize that most of the trouble you're having is caused by your interpretation of the situation. From the very beginning, for me as a horse trainer, I was very good at very empathetically solving problems. It's not a bigger stick type approach. It was more a go back to the beginning and figure out where the problem's coming from.

[\(00:27:42\)](#):

But the more I've gotten into it, the more I realize, oh no, it's way further back than that. And it's my interpretations of those first interactions, basically lack of connection, lack of connection from the very start to where it's not a symbiotic relationship, but I'm in. For me, it comes back to the culture in my childhood, which was the parenting style in my childhood, which was stop crying. I'll give you something to cry about. It's that children should be seen and not heard, and that kind of carries forward with you. That's a part of who you are sort of thing. And then you tend to interact with the world that way, including horses. And so you get very good at certain techniques to train horses or whatever. But the more I get into into the connection with horses, the less techniques I need later on because you realize that the techniques you needed later on were actually techniques to counteract the problem you created in the first place, if you get what I mean.

Linda Kohanov [\(00:28:46\)](#):

Yeah. It really goes all the way back to how horses are weaned because people were not thinking of horses as intelligent, much less that they learned from their parents. I mean, in the 1990s, it was still considered scientific fact that people would say horses didn't have emotions. That's since been disproved scientifically by the Cambridge Declaration on consciousness in non-human animals that in 2012, a group of scientists got together at Yale or Princeton, some famous university, and they actually signed a statement declaring that all the research shows that animals have emotions and feelings. They show intentional behaviors. They're not biological machines. And so it took that long to finally get a group of scientists to study what the rest of us can see in front of our eyes to finally make that declaration.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:29:46\)](#):

I think you should read that book. What Do Animals Think? What did I say that that's the subtitle Beyond Words, because it's called Beyond Words, what Do Animals Think and Feel? And it's all about that exact thing right there, how scientists for the long time, if you anthropomorphized in the slightest bit that was not scientific and you were wrong, and animals don't have emotions. And the way this guy puts some arguments in the book, he has people, scientists tell him, well, animals aren't humans so they don't have the same emotions. And he goes, yes, but what you have to remember is humans are animals.

Linda Kohanov [\(00:30:26\)](#):

Absolutely. A lot of times when we get accused of anthropomorphizing animals, it's like a no-no to anthropomorphized humans. A lot of times we don't really give humans credit for the deep levels of feeling and the deep insights you can have beyond words as humans. And so a lot of times, I guess I saw this term in a book years ago in a book called Adam's Task, and it's about naming animals and other aspects of animal intelligence, but it's a very old book, and it's not an easy read. It's written very stiffly, but it's very interesting. And the author talks about how as humans, we not only ies other animals, in

other words think of them in the style of the machine. We do that to ourselves. We memorize ourselves, and we think a lot of times that it is our brain that is really in charge and that the rest of our body is just this big hunk of meat that carries our brain around.

[\(00:31:33\)](#):

And that's not true at all. I mean, it's very clear that your body has all kinds of forms of intelligence. In fact, it's like your body is the horse that your mind rides around on. It's a sentient being not a machine. And we all know what it feels like to have your mind and your brain thinking, I'm going to do one thing, and your body's leading you in a completely different direction with a completely different opinion about things. And so learning how to form, I would say a natural horsemanship partnership with your own body is the beginning of really breaking through to having a better relationship with your horse and the rest of the world.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:32:11\)](#):

Yeah. I like what you said about we've been taught to believe that it all comes back all the way back to, I think therefore I am the head is the thing, and the body's nothing. But these days, they can prove that there's many, I suppose you call neuroreceptors in your gut as there is in your brain. You have three brains. You have your head, your heart, and your gut. And yeah, I think we are taught to be in our head and not in our bodies at all. And we are missing all the good stuff down there.

Linda Kohanov [\(00:32:50\)](#):

I mean, just to understand that we have more neural cells in our gut than in our entire spinal column, and that your heart has a mini brain with at least 40,000 neural cells. And also there are neural cells running freely through your body, through your bloodstream. So your entire body is this gigantic tuner and receiver and amplifier for all kinds of information coming from the environment, coming from other people you're interacting with from other beings, and also just your own internal compassing system, maybe what we might call intuition. The body is, I mean, really only 10% of human communication is verbal. That's what psychologists said in the 1990s when they studied this, and some of that, some of the other 90% has to do with vocal tone. But if you're only paying attention to what you can speak about in words or write about in words, you're not even tapping into that other 90%. I mean, imagine if somebody said to you on your first day of med school and you want to be a brain surgeon, if they said, yeah, we're so happy you're here. You made it into Harvard Medical School, and we're going to teach you 10% of what you need to know to be successful as a brain surgeon, that seem like the biggest, most dangerous rip off in the world

Warwick Schiller [\(00:34:12\)](#):

When you put it that way. Yeah, when you put it that way.

Linda Kohanov [\(00:34:16\)](#):

So in terms of interacting with a horse who's really paying attention to the other 90% big time, if you're only floating around in that 10% of what could be translated into words, you're missing a huge amount of information. And the horses have a way of drawing us into that really embodied experience in life. And when you Go ahead,

Warwick Schiller [\(00:34:41\)](#):

Sorry. I was going to say, there's a book that someone gave me a couple of years ago called Radical Wholeness, and in their book they talk about an East African tribe called the Anglo Iwe tribe, and they say that we have nine senses, and one of those senses is something that they called cesme and CME translates into English as feel with the flesh from the inside out. So it's that somatic experience of your body being like you just said, like a tuner, and you can tune into all sorts of vibration and energies and that sort of thing. And see what they don't do is drum that out of their children. It's talked about, it's part of who they are. And so it's perfectly normal, and I think we're all born with that anyway. And then this culture that we live in, this society we live in doesn't address it, doesn't talk about it, doesn't promote it, doesn't discuss it, and we kind of lose that ability. And I

Linda Kohanov ([00:35:58](#)):

Think that, well, it's a really clever social control. If you can cut somebody off from all of the other 90% and all of the somatic feeling sensory experiences, and you make them focus on just the brain and just the words of authority figures, you can mesmerize people into doing whatever you want them to do against their own best interests. And so cutting people off from their bodies is an actual tactic to make us more susceptible to the influence of authority figures who do not have our best interests at heart.

Warwick Schiller ([00:36:34](#)):

And this has been going on for a while. If you think about burning so-called witches at the state, anybody that had any sort of intuition with animals or healing abilities, they were at the time was the church eliminated them from society. I mean, society. I was reading something the other day, and it said during the Middle ages, all of the really intuitive people, the ones that were really connected to things they were, they had their heads chopped off or burnt at the stake or whatever. It's like the inquisition was almost like the inquisition against the connected people.

Linda Kohanov ([00:37:21](#)):

Well, and from a church perspective, I mean, this has been going on regardless of religion for a long time. But from a church perspective, what they did was they made anything having to do with the body or sensory experience or sensuality evil. And so that's another way they really just solidified that way to cut us off from our wisdom, our own inner wisdom, and cause us to be basically cogs in the wheel to serve their own nefarious purposes.

Warwick Schiller ([00:37:54](#)):

And the more I get into this stuff, the more I'm really interested, I'm really interested in shamanic stuff, but what I'm really interested in is, let's call it collective wisdom, collective consciousness, earth wisdom. I've had a lot of different people on the podcast. Do you know Rupert Isaacson?

Linda Kohanov ([00:38:26](#)):

Yes. I don't know him. I know of him.

Warwick Schiller ([00:38:31](#)):

So Rupert took his son on four different healing journeys around the world to see different shamans and one's in Mongolia. One was in the rainforest, the daintree rainforest in Australia. One was a Native American healer in Arizona, and one was in the Kalahari Bushman and the Kalahari. And these are cultures that are thousands of years old with thousands of year old traditions that have been around

since before ship sailed around the world. So information didn't go for one place or the other, but I think three out of the four of 'em, their ceremonies and the things they did, they sucked black sticky stuff out of Rowan's head and threw it away in their shamanic ceremony. And it's like they all did the same thing, and they've all been doing the same thing for thousands of years. So obviously it's like earth wisdom. It's not like, oh, someone sent someone a letter and they read it and this is how to do it.

[\(00:39:33\)](#):

A few years ago I went to Florida and did a three day ayahuasca ceremony. And so learning about ayahuasca, it comes from a vine and a leaf from the Amazon that get boiled up together and that works. And you think about there's something like 800,000 different species of plants in the Amazonian jungle. How do they figure out which two to put together? Well, the Iwa Eros from down there will say, oh, the plants told us. It's that earth wisdom stuff. So yeah, that's the stuff I'm really interested into these days. And anyway, getting back to the horses with what you do.

Linda Kohanov [\(00:40:15\)](#):

Well, we have a lot of

Warwick Schiller [\(00:40:17\)](#):

Are introduction to that.

Linda Kohanov [\(00:40:18\)](#):

Yeah. Well, I mean horses awaken shamanic states in people. And so that is like when I do equine facilitated experiential learning workshops, and sometimes even when I'm working with therapists, with people with trauma, sometimes we do purposefully engage shamanic states of consciousness that allow you to ship things very efficiently in a way that your logical mind can't get to on its own. And horses are well known across multiple cultures as being able to take humans between this world and the so-called other world, in other words, into an altered state of consciousness. And there are multiple myths throughout the world that horses are capable of doing this. And so those of us who've worked with horses who've accidentally at times tripped off into some kind of expanded stage of consciousness, know this for real. This is not just a metaphor, this is not just a myth.

[\(00:41:21\)](#):

These myths are actually telling us that horses are capable of doing this. And so we actually have a variety of different principles and experiences that exercise this ability in people through work with horses in ways that we actually don't need to take ayahuasca or psychedelic mushrooms or something. I'm not against that. I have definitely taken some of those substances in the past for deep work. But with horses and imagery associated with horses, you can actually access these altered states and learn to have a little bit more control over them. Because as you know, if you take something like ayahuasca, you're on that train for 10 to 12 hours, you don't get off. You don't have a choice, right? And it can be frightening at times and very transformational too. But when you access altered states through working with horses and using certain horse related myths and metaphors, if you're going too deep, you just open your eyes and sit up. We do journeys that exercise, this ability, and part of the ability to exercise, this is the ability to control the experience to a certain extent so that you can call on these altered states, these expansive transformational states at will. And you don't necessarily need the drugs. You can actually exercise your consciousness to shift into those states. They're milder, certainly than if you're going to take something, a plant medicine. But we have that capacity to do this, and the horses are there to help us learn how.

Warwick Schiller ([00:43:07](#)):

So tell me more about the altered states working with horses. Normally on the podcast, I don't usually get into what people do. It's more about, it's the journey on podcasts, what led you on this journey, but I'm now fascinated by what you just said. So what sort of things do you do and how are the horses involved in that?

Linda Kohanov ([00:43:33](#)):

Well, it just started out through experience. So this fits right into the idea of the journey, because when I initially got my first horse, as I mentioned, I was just trying to get away from a bunch of crazy people and one of the things that

Warwick Schiller ([00:43:48](#)):

Happened in the horse world.

Linda Kohanov ([00:43:51](#)):

So then, yeah, I know that was another issue. I realized once you go to the barn, you realize there are certain people you cannot get away from. But in any case, one of the things that would happen to me when I was with the horses is that I would have to pay more attention to somatic information coming in that other 90%, the body wisdom. And I learned almost like a vocabulary of nonverbal communication. And over time, I was able to really focus on these elements of the vocabulary of nonverbal communication and learn how to teach them very specifically different kinds of horse activities. But early on, what happened too was I started to have really expansive intuitive experiences. So it was like the horses were opening up intuition and mystical experiences. Sometimes it would be in dreams that night, and sometimes it would be also just situations where the horses would open something up in me and I would have access to a lot of material I didn't even realize it was possible to pick up on, we would call this, we would put this under the heading of intuition, expanding intuition.

([00:45:13](#)):

But it got really bizarre, really bizarre. It's like there's an intelligence in nature and there's an intelligence to horses. There's a kind of collective intelligence to horses that I eventually access. I call it the horse ancestors. But one of the things that happened was I had a mare and a stallion named raa and midnight Merlin, midnight Merlin was the stallion, and he was a basket case. He was very dangerous, and I learned a lot from working with him as I know, and I'm sure you have learned from very difficult horses at times, things that you could use in less intense situations. But Merlin and Rossa made it a few times and they didn't have any foals. And so I wasn't really running a breeding farm. So one year I just let them mate once just for fun, just because they like to be together. And we had the vet come out and check raa and she wasn't pregnant.

([00:46:15](#)):

But then what happened was it was deceptive, it was hidden. The pregnancy was hidden from us. Not only was the pregnancy hidden from us and the vets, it turned out that RAA had twins. And twins are very dangerous in horses. Usually they don't survive. Usually they're born premature and they die immediately. We didn't know RAA had twins. Eventually we realized she was pregnant when she kept getting fatter, and then we could feel a baby moving around in there. But she ended up having twins and one was stillborn and the other one was so premature that we had to milk RAA and bottle feed this baby for 10 weeks. We had, he needed 24 hour care for 10 weeks. And I talk about this in my book

writing *Between the Worlds*, but what happened was because this fool needed 24 hour care, he couldn't stand in nurse.

(00:47:10):

We had to put him in a sling so he wouldn't damage his legs, but we fed him with a bottle and I would be taking the night shift. And so I started to research the symbology of twins. I don't know, just because that's kind of what I do when something new comes up, I like to research it. What I found was that male twins in particular across multiple myths through multiple cultures are associated with horses. And a lot of times one of the male twins dies, and some of these male twins are either horse trainers in Greece, they are horse trainers, or they can morph into horses at will. And so they're often associated also with the healing arts. So the aspens in India are a group of or two males that can turn into horses, and they created the healing arts. And it's kind of a long story, but in any case, what became very apparent was in these myths, one of the male twins dies.

(00:48:20):

And what happens when one of the males twins dies is that it connects the living twin to the other world. So that this mythology of two male twins is the idea that every one of us has twin forms of consciousness, this logical earthly twin with a set location and time and space and a biography, and then this other worldly twin that exists in a realm that has much more potential in freedom. And so the horses themselves actually manifested actual twins, one of which was stillborn and one of which lived. And through that, I was able to create a series of exercises and perspectives that allow people to basically exercise their twin. And so when people are learning how to access shamanic states of consciousness, for instance, we actually bring in this idea of twin forms of consciousness. So this allows people who you don't have to change your religion in order to engage shamanic states of consciousness from this horse facilitated model. And so I actually had a Methodist minister from Lubbock, Texas come to a workshop that involved leadership training, but some shamanic elements, and he was able, as a Christian minister to go into this altered state and to have a tremendous integrative experience without any assistance from any substances. So I do believe that the horses have a way of exercising this in humans and giving us also a mythology that allows us to expand our consciousness.

Warwick Schiller (00:50:07):

Wow, I was just mesmerized listening to all that right there. That's right up my alley these days. Where am I going to go next with this?

Linda Kohanov (00:50:18):

I'm curious too.

Warwick Schiller (00:50:19):

I'm excited about what you just said, and I want to know more about that, but I'm still wanting to go back to the beginning to, did you end up, so when you started down this path, did you end up getting a psych degree or anything like that?

Linda Kohanov (00:50:39):

No. What happened was, because I was a journalist, I was also writing for a regional paper as their music critic, the Tucson Weekly, kind of like the LA Weekly sort of thing. I was writing some cover stories for them about a variety of topics, and I decided to write a story on what horses have to teach people, because a lot of people in Tucson have horses. It's easy to have horses. It's not that expensive. And I was

learning a lot and changing a lot from working with horses, and I was wanting to write an article about that. And I got the assignment and I started to write the article, and I realized that I couldn't characterize this situation in 2000 words. And so I started writing my first book called *The Dao of equ, a Woman's Journey of Healing and Transformation through the way of the horse* to sort of chronicle my journey and to really learn how to describe what it is that the horses are teaching us that is so often beyond words.

[\(00:51:49\)](#):

And over time, I got better and better at it. And I also realized that there was a lot of scientific research coming up in the early two thousands that could help to explain very strange experiences I had been having with the horses. And so over the years, I just keep collecting scientific studies that helped to describe actual experiences that just blew all of my circuits. And then once you can see, you can kind of normalize it then because your logical brain then is willing to accept these other possibilities once some scientist has put his stamp on some kind of theory that helps to explain it. So I'm interested in science and spirituality. I'm interested in physical manifestation. I'm interested in the deep emotional life. I'm just really interested in being in having a holistic approach. And by that I mean body, mind, spirit and emotion, and this world and this state of consciousness and all of those amazing other states of consciousness that the horses can help us access as well.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:52:59\)](#):

It's interesting. I mentioned before that I spent most of my life not having any somatic experiences, and as time goes on, there's more and more. But right then that little bit that you just said, right then I kind of got this sensation and my therapist has got me, anytime I get a sensation to pause and feel it, what does it feel like? Does it have a shape? How would I describe it? And so I was kind of half thinking about that while you're talking, but I got hit in the chest here with something rather right then that was very, very pleasurable. That was actually very cool. You mentioned right then the *do of equ*, and before you mentioned the, what did you call 'em, the horse ancestors. I remember reading that in the book where they kind of came to you in a dream, didn't they?

Linda Kohanov [\(00:53:53\)](#):

If I'm Well, it was more than a dream. It was being followed around by a thickness in the air, a force that had a kind of intention and intelligence to it. And I felt like I was going crazy. And I mean, the horses did open me up to this. And so I ended up going to a counselor, and I do talk about this in the *dial of equ*, and she had had some experience with shamanic states of consciousness. So I felt like she wasn't going to think I was totally crazy, but through working with her, she helped me access this form of intelligence. It's hard to explain because a lot of it is beyond words and beyond what we would normally consider to be logic, but the horse ancestors is the collective wisdom and mind of the horses. It would hold all the memories of every horse who ever lived.

[\(00:54:49\)](#):

It really also feels like it is like you can call any horse's spirit out of the horse ancestors' complex. So I even use it with living horses sometimes I'll use it as a translation device, really. And I've had really wild experiences. I've had some dud experiences and things were, not much is happening. And then I've had really wild things. I had this man one time ask me if I could connect with the spirit of one of his horses. And I'm not really a medium, I've never practiced that, but I just said, okay, I'll give it a try. And I connected with this horse and it kept drawing my attention to it's left eye. And I said, I don't know. I'm not getting anything from this horse other than just, it keeps showing me it's left eye. And he said, oh, yes, my horse was blind in her left eye.

[\(00:55:42\)](#):

So how do you explain something like that? There is some way, it's almost like your brain is a radio tuner, and if you switch, you learn how to function on more than one channel, I guess. And some of these things are available on other channels. So I would say the horse ancestors channel is like another channel. And if you tap into that, and I think it's good to always have healthy skepticism about these things, but you can have healthy skepticism to work with the material. In the same way we have healthy skepticism about making choices from a logical point of view.

[\(00:56:20\)](#):

And I've used it one time. For instance, I used it with a training challenge. So my twin horse who was born, who survived, his name is Spirit. I named him Spirit because he actually had more spirit than body at that moment. He was so premature, but he was very mouthy for a while, and we were trying everything. I was even trying the Tillington Jones tea touches on the mouth that are supposed to relax the mouth. We tried everything. And so finally I just said, okay, I'm going to see if I can consult the horse ancestors about this. And so you don't want to be in an altered state present with a loose horse. So I always step away from the horses, and I might be over the fence under a tree, or I might go inside, and then I basically back, this is a way it appears to me is that I'm connecting with the horse ancestors, the wisdom of all horses who've ever lived and have yet to be born.

[\(00:57:15\)](#):

And I'm actually calling forth the spirit or the wisdom of a particular horse. And so in this case, it would be spirit. And I was just saying, I need some help here. This is terrible. He's grabbing the lead rope and he's jerking it out of people's hands, and he's biting people's clothes, and I don't want to keep smacking him on the mouth or something like that. That would just create a traumatized source. And so all I saw was just this image behind my eyes, and it looked like a negative of a film. And I saw spirit's face, and then I saw his mouth, had a lot of energy, chaotic energy around it, and then I saw his ears light up. And so that's all I would see. And I saw this over and over and over again, and I'm like, well, this is pretty useless.

[\(00:58:01\)](#):

I guess this horse ancestors thing is not working today or maybe never works. Maybe it's just all my imagination. So I went outside and I said, okay, I'm just going to play with this for a minute. So I had the halter in my hand, and I noticed that as I put the halter near spirit's face, his face got really agitated. And then I said, tell me about your ears spirit. And when I said that and looked at his ears, it's like his mouth relaxed, and it's like his eyes kind of were looking for his ears. His attention went up to his ears, his mouth relaxed, and I put the halter on. So I've used that with other horses that are really mouthy and have trouble putting the halter on. I'll just draw attention away from the horse's mouth and focus on the horse's ears, and he puts the halter on. So I mean, how do you come up with stuff like this? I mean, our brains have a capacity to access things that's far beyond words and also far beyond logic.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:59:02\)](#):

Yeah, and I think I talked before about reconnecting with nature itself, but I think back when we were hunter gatherers or whatever we were, I think we all had the ability to do that. And I think the challenge is to rewild ourselves or reacquaint ourselves with that. It's interesting you talk about the, oh, he didn't say collective consciousness, but what did you say about all the horses, the knowledge of all the horses?

Linda Kohanov [\(00:59:38\)](#):

Was he like the collective consciousness of horses, the collective memory, but the collective wisdom of horses? Actually, when I was working with this counselor who was also highly intuitive, she taught me a lot of intuitive skills that I sense have used to teach others. But one of the things she did was she taught me to connect with this force, and I asked what it was. And the words that came into my mind when I asked that question was the words ancestors called itself the wisdom that gives rise to the form of the horse. Interesting. The wisdom that gives rise to the form of the horse. And so it's almost like it has a creation feeling to it. It has a feeling of intelligent creation, and so that there's a form or a complex of wisdom that wanted to express itself in a certain, and it created the form of the horse to express that wisdom.

[\(01:00:39\)](#):

And so I think that what you and I, and so many of your listeners and so many of my colleagues and clients, what we're all interested in is accessing the wisdom that gives rise to the form of the horse. And actually over time, learning how to incorporate that wisdom into our mind, body awareness systems to become cent, so to speak, so that we have, yes, our human orientation, but we also have this profound wisdom of the horse that we're fully integrating and able to really run with in the world, and to lead much more empowered and compassionate and deeply satisfying lives as a result.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:01:25\)](#):

Yeah, I think so. Have you ever read any books by Rupert Sheldrick?

Linda Kohanov [\(01:01:28\)](#):

Absolutely. I've met Rupert Sheldrick. I talk about 'em in my books for sure. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:01:32\)](#):

Oh, really? Okay. He talks about how they did an experiment with rats at a university somewhere in the world, and they taught these rats to do something that no rats would've ever been taught to do some strange puzzle or maze or whatever. And every rat took a certain amount of time to figure it out while they were teaching these group of rats. But then they had a university in Australia repeat it and the university in America repeat it. And somewhere else, once they taught that one lot of rats how to do it, every other rat in the world that learned how to do it, learn it in half the time,

Linda Kohanov [\(01:02:04\)](#):

I believe

Warwick Schiller [\(01:02:05\)](#):

That that group of it was like once, one lot of rats knew how to do it, the other ones could pick it up easier. And that's that collective consciousness. Yeah.

Linda Kohanov [\(01:02:14\)](#):

Yeah. I mean, that's such a great case for that because what happened, these rats learned this, and then that wisdom went into what you might call the rat ancestors,

Warwick Schiller [\(01:02:25\)](#):

The

Linda Kohanov ([01:02:25](#)):

Rat collective consciousness. And then, so every rat in the world could tune into that collective wisdom and access that new piece of wisdom. And Rupert Sheldrake's books, and he talks about the theory of morph. A genetic fields helps to describe this. So believe me, when I was accessing the horse ancestors and thinking I was going crazy, I feel like Rupert Sheldrake saved my sanity because he was one of the first scientists who I could find something to hang on my hat on with some of these weird experiences.

Warwick Schiller ([01:02:58](#)):

What's that term he uses? Morphic resonance? Is that it? Morphic resonance,

Linda Kohanov ([01:03:01](#)):

I think. Yeah. Morphic resonance and morphogenetic fields. And it all fits in with this idea of the wisdom that gives rise to the form of the horse. He says that basically the theory of morphic resonance is that there's a complex of wisdom or knowledge that every animal that's forming to manifest in this world can access that wisdom and that IC field of rap wisdom or horse wisdom or dog wisdom, is also what causes the, it's almost like he sees our D n A as more like a tuner and receiver for information floating around in the universe. And so then you tune into the morphic field or morph a genetic field of your particular species, and that helps to even create your physical body. So it gives a completely different version of the brain. I mean, the brain according to him is not, is more like a tuner and receiver than it is just a self-contained functional device.

([01:04:15](#)):

So it's like the difference between it's thinking of it, your brain is more like a television receiver, so you can tune to different channels with your television receiver, but the programs that come over are floating through the air in an invisible state and you tune into it and you can access that. But your brain is not creating old reruns of I Love Lucy or C S I or some latest wild movie. Your brain is actually tuning into the information that's floating free through the universe. And so that was a very helpful idea for me to be able to just survive mentally this idea that I was having these strange experiences with the horses.

Warwick Schiller ([01:05:09](#)):

Yeah, I'm lucky by the time I started going down this path, people like you had been doing it for years and it's all explainable, whereas you were like, there wasn't a lot of explanation out there for you. And I guess when you first started exploring with this stuff, and here's a question for you. Did you ever think, because you kind of mentioned it a minute ago, jokingly, but did you ever think, I'm going crazy?

Linda Kohanov ([01:05:33](#)):

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. The experience has kept being consistent and then I was able to communicate certain concepts and then principles and then teaching activities to people and they could reproduce similar effects. So then after a while you're like, okay, this is legitimate. And yeah, it's just been quite a wild journey and the horses are still showing us things that I'm seeing the horses do things all the time that I'm like, well, how would you explain that one? But it's like you see, a lot of times I think what happens is we don't see horses doing things and accessing things. We're not paying attention to it, so we just don't even know what's happening. But it's just going on all around us. And so the more you key in horses and see them as sentient beings who can teach us a few things as well, then the more you start to really access wisdom that is far beyond what we would normally even consider possible.

Warwick Schiller ([01:06:49](#)):

That's number one. You've got to be present enough to be able to do that. And you've also got to be able to shed the lens that you've been either society or your previous experience with horses, your horse mentors. You've got to be able to get rid of that lens that has been put there. Otherwise you're just creating around reality. You're only seeing what you want to see or you think you're seeing rather than seeing what's really going on. And I think that's part of the journey is peeling those layers off, peeling the lenses away so you can actually see what's really there. And I know for me with the horses, the less that I want to do with 'em, and the more I just want to listen to them, the more I get from 'em.

Linda Kohanov ([01:07:47](#)):

Yeah, I mean there's just volumes and volumes you could write about the wisdom that they have to teach and the perspectives that they have in the world. I feel like, like I said, I've written five books and I feel like I'm just scratching the surface. And there's so much more that you can experience with the horses that can ever be put in a book too. I mean, we all have these experiences that we just stand and look at each other and we can't even speak about it hardly. And I know that that's part of the reason why you've had this feeling of opening and transformation. And then you're just, it's like the rug's been pulled out from underneath you and you're staring at the universe underneath you just hanging in space or something. And it can be really disconcerting at first, but after a while, then you are able to create a new worldview around you that expands into that space. So then you have a floor again, at least for a while until the next time the rug is pulled out from underneath you.

Warwick Schiller ([01:08:56](#)):

We've got a fo, he's probably eight months old now, I guess seven or eight months. And one day I was just out there hanging out with him. And so he's a Palomino, he's a big white face, but he's got these really blue eyes. But I was just hanging out with him, just his face was right in front of mine, like a foot in front of mine. And I was looking into his eye and suddenly I had this, I could see the being behind the physical shell of this. He was probably four or five months old at the time, but I got a sense of whatever it is behind that. And it was almost like I was looking into his eye into the universe, but it wasn't the universe I was looking into his eye. And I dunno, I just had this sensation that of this wise all knowing, being behind, I dunno if I'm explaining that very well, but I haven't actually had that happen. I've had it actually happen with one human since to where I got the same sensation. And that was actually at the podcast summit talking to someone there. But yeah, it was like the world completely changed.

([01:10:17](#)):

The veil had been lifted for a moment while I was looking in this horse's eye. It was a pretty amazing experience. And then of course, the veil

Linda Kohanov ([01:10:27](#)):

Of those mystical experiences is that you're searching for words, but I think that if you can find even a few words to write down or a quick sketch of a picture of what it was like, even if it's not even close, you're just taking a few notes so that it will induce the experience later when you go back to it. So you're not going to ever be able to capture it in words, but you can put down enough words that when you read them now you're going to go back into the experience and really feel that soul of that beautiful being that is still living with you, it sounds like.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:08](#)):

Yes. Yeah, it was pretty amazing.

Linda Kohanov ([01:11:10](#)):

Very. What's the Worst's name?

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:12](#)):

His name? Bodhi, of course.

Linda Kohanov ([01:11:14](#)):

Oh, lovely. Yeah, that works. And did you know that the Buddha was an exceptional horseman and that a lot of his mindfulness skills really, I believe came from his deep understanding of how to work with horses. And I make a case for that in one of my books. So I really do talk about the Buddha in there. And not too many people know that he truly was an exceptional horse trainer.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:39](#)):

Well, I was going to say, I just read that recently, but then when you continued on, I'm like, oh, I read it in your bio. I think

Linda Kohanov ([01:11:46](#)):

Really? Oh, maybe. Maybe. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:48](#)):

Maybe one of the things I've looked up online about you, it mentioned the Buddha, it mentioned maybe Winston Churchill,

Linda Kohanov ([01:12:03](#)):

George Washington,

Warwick Schiller ([01:12:04](#)):

George Washington. Yeah, that was you.

Linda Kohanov ([01:12:07](#)):

Yeah, that was me.

Warwick Schiller ([01:12:10](#)):

I was just thinking like yesterday or the day before I read something about the Buddha was an amazing horseman.

Linda Kohanov ([01:12:15](#)):

Well, I talked about this quite a bit in my book, the Power of the Herd. And what I did was I was researching leadership throughout history across multiple cultures. And one of the things that I found was that really exceptional leaders throughout history were often really exceptional horsemen, horsewomen, or horse trainers. I mean, the percentage is so high actually, it's unbelievable, really successful, innovative leaders, not the ones that oppress people, but the ones who've expanded,

Warwick Schiller ([01:12:49](#)):

Not the dictators,

Linda Kohanov ([01:12:50](#)):

Not so much the dictators, well, occasionally, but so one of the things I started looking at is what were these people learning from their horses that caused them to create an innovation in human experience and leadership in life? And so the horses have been literally inspiring leaders for years to expand our wisdom and our way of being in the world. And I really do believe it's completely associated with horses.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:26](#)):

Yes. Amazing stuff. So tell me how many you've written five books.

Linda Kohanov ([01:13:30](#)):

Yes.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:31](#)):

The first was the Dao of Quis.

Linda Kohanov ([01:13:32](#)):

Yes.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:35](#)):

When did you write that?

Linda Kohanov ([01:13:37](#)):

I wrote that book. That book took a long time to write. I probably wrote it between 1998 and when it came out in 2001, and actually the publication of Date of the Dao of Quis was nine 11 2001. So on the day that I was all excited that my book was coming out and I was going to do all these cool interviews for the book, it came out on nine 11, 2001. So all the twin towers are falling or both of the twin towers are falling. And so it was just a weird experience, but the book still got a lot of traction and people around the world started finding it and coming out to do workshops and that sort of thing. So even with the nine 11 Association, it did pretty well. And actually my editor just called me this week and he wants me to write a revised version of the DA of Equi. And I'm so glad because there's a lot of wild experiences in the DA of Equi that I can actually describe better about what's going on because the research that can describe it is now actually accessible. So I'm really excited to go back and rewrite this book and add some of the latest research.

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:57](#)):

It must have been a really hard book to write because you're trying to put into words experiences that are hard to put into words.

Linda Kohanov ([01:15:09](#)):

Yeah, it was maddening. It took forever for that reason because I was trying to describe things that were not just surface horse human interactions. I was trying to talk about how I had been completely

transformed by my association with these animals and what were the things that shifted. And it reminds me of this article about Ray Hunt. Ray Hunt was one of the original people who influenced so many natural horsemanship professionals out there. And I was so interested. I was reading this little, these little horse newspapers that everyone gets in their communities that have horses for sale and different ads and things, and they always have little articles and stuff. Well, in this little horse paper in Tucson, they had an article about Ray Hunt. He had come down and done some workshops and somebody had interviewed him. She said that Ray Hunt said that he talked about, they were talking about some of his innovations of training and stuff.

[\(01:16:09\)](#):

And finally Ray Hunt said, you know what? There's one other thing that makes it all work, and I don't know what that is. And so that was really, that's really the theme of my book and my work is to describe that one other thing that makes it all work. And it's a bunch of things actually, but it's all of this stuff beyond words. So I've been on this quest to answer that question, what is it that makes any technique with horses work? It's not mechanical. It's something inside of you, something that your nervous system is doing, something that you're doing energetically to extend a connection to the horse and be moved by the horse and have the horse be moved by you. And so to really break these things down, a lot of times cowboys talk about developing feel. And so what I was really interested in is studying how to methodically help people develop, feel, and it is possible to do that.

[\(01:17:08\)](#):

But a lot of times with horse trainers, they are focusing on how you use this particular whip or carrot stick that they've created and this particular kind of halter and this kind of rope and this particular activity. But it's always the same. There's one other thing that makes it all work. You can watch five people go in with the same equipment and you can see various levels of success. So there is something that makes it all work. And a lot of times with horse people we're accidentally over time developing feel. We're accidentally over time developing that one other thing that makes it all work, but it's accidental. It's not purposeful because we don't know how to develop that. But there are ways to develop that one other thing. And so that's actually my primary interest in continuing with all of this

Warwick Schiller [\(01:18:03\)](#):

Over time. And I've said this before in the podcast, but I've done clinics for many years and I would come over from a clinic and say to my wife, she just had it going. I go, it was pretty good. But there's just, wow. There's this one lady, I couldn't help her. She was useless. And I used to think, I used to say she needs to get a cat, preferably an outside cat or a stuffed cat because she's not very good with horses. But over the time, what I've realized is those people are not very good with themselves. They're not very connected to themselves. They have no self-awareness. They're not sure. They dunno what their body, they're not very congruent, put it that way. And so for a number of years now, I've been focusing more on that part of it as the first step, like being in your own body and being aware of your thoughts, your judgments, how you view the world, being aware of your body because the technique, if there's a technique involved, it won't work if you don't have all that stuff going on. It sounds like that's what you guys that are in your profession, which you're going to get to here in a minute with some of your questions, that's the big thing you guys are focused on. Because for me, when I do clinics, they are horse training clinics. And so there's a transformational part of it, but people aren't showing up for a transformational experience, which I'm thinking I'd like to kind of change in the future at some point in time. But

Linda Kohanov [\(01:19:37\)](#):

I would love if you change that.

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:41](#)):

I've got to get more education about that. But I'd really like to start there. But anyway, I just mentioned profession, and I've got these questions here that you chose that have some of 'em have to do with your profession. So I might actually start in on these questions if you don't mind.

Linda Kohanov ([01:19:56](#)):

Not at all.

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:58](#)):

So your first question that you chose was if you could spread a message throughout the world, one that people would listen to, what would that be? Or your quote or both if you've got 'em.

Linda Kohanov ([01:20:11](#)):

Well, I guess I already covered that when I talked about the fact that nature is benevolent and intelligent and that mutual aid, competition, avoidance, these are very important things in nature that allow us to be successful and not just survive, but thrive. And so the survival of the fittest is not about survival of the strongest and most fierce and intimidating survival of the fittest really means those who engage in mutual aid, who uplift each other, who help each other, who this is how you really thrive in the world. And then bringing in that book Mutual Aid, a Factor of Evolution by Peter Kin. It's a great book. Another great book though that really starts to talk about the oxytocin response, this hormone that nature created to cause us to buffer the flight or fight response in favor of a calm and connect response. There's a great book by Meg Daily, Olmert, O L M E R T called Made for Each Other, the Biology of the Human Animal Bond.

([01:21:22](#)):

And she makes a really great case for the fact that it was the release of this hormone oxytocin that actually brought horses and humans together and other animals with humans together, is that the oxytocin response actually was activated in animals and humans that were designed to connect with each other. And that we have evolved. We have co-evolved together with these animals, dogs, cats, and horses in particular caused, not only did we change them through selective breeding, but that they changed us as well. So if you really are interested in that topic, a really great book to read is Made for each other by Meg Daily or for each

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:06](#)):

Other, Welles. Yeah. I love that message that you had about, it's not survival of the fittest, and it's like I mentioned it before, have you ever read The Secret Life of Trees?

Linda Kohanov ([01:22:25](#)):

I read The Secret Life of Plants, so that sounds like another one I need to get. I mean, really we, I think everybody in your audience is all about trading exciting books to read. So I'm learning a few new books here talking with you as well,

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:43](#)):

The Hidden Life of Trees. Sorry, not to see. Or The Hidden Life. The Hidden Life of Trees. Yeah, it's one of those ones that trees have personalities and they have communities, and they, oh, yeah, once you get into that stuff, it's really pretty amazing. Okay, next question is what do you feel is the worst advice given in your profession or bad recommendation given by people in your area of expertise? But before we do that, we have to quantify, what would you say your profession is?

Linda Kohanov ([01:23:14](#)):

Well, what I would say is I am one of the innovators in a field that we would call equine facilitated human development or equine facilitated learning. When I work with equ

Warwick Schiller ([01:23:29](#)):

Facilit professionals, human development. Yeah, I love that title.

Linda Kohanov ([01:23:34](#)):

And I also do equine facilitated therapy in conjunction with mental health professionals like Dr. Rebecca Bailey. But also I think a lot of what I do is I do work with horse people and animal lovers and animal advocates and animal rescue people to teach them that one other thing that makes it all work, that teaches them how to be able to access things that are going to help them in their relationship with their horses and the other animals in their life. And then ultimately, as you know with the humans in their life, if you make those changes and can be that perceptive and assertive and compassionate and centered with animals, then it will translate to your human relationships.

Warwick Schiller ([01:24:19](#)):

Yeah, I get emails all the time since I've been following your stuff, blah, blah, blah. I'm getting along so much better with my husband or coworker or boss or children or whatever. And I think that's one of the great things about horses is people are passionate about horses, and so they'll put the time and effort into it, and they wouldn't put that much time and effort into showing up better for their husband or their kids or their boss or their coworker, but they'll do it for the horses and the rest of the world gets the benefit of it. One of the amazing things about horses,

Linda Kohanov ([01:24:53](#)):

Absolutely, one of the things that I would say that I am getting better at is how to take horse wisdom directly back to the human world. So I do workshops and lectures in places where horses can't be, and there are some lessons I can teach to people directly through various kinds of activities and concepts without the horses, but the wisdom itself comes directly from the horses,

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:21](#)):

Comes from the horses. So we quantified your profession, but we haven't answered the question. What do you feel is the worst advice given in your profession?

Linda Kohanov ([01:25:31](#)):

If I really think back on when I first started working with horses, what is the worst advice that I ever got? It was leave your emotions at the gate. It's actually not possible to do that. People cannot leave their emotions at the gate. You don't want to subject your horse to the fact that you're angry at a coworker or something like that, but you actually can't hide your emotions from the horse. And I actually have

looked into and studied a lot of scientific theories that show why that's impossible. So if you can't hide your emotions from your horse, if you can't leave your emotions at the gate, what are you going to do with 'em? It has to be constructive. And so over the years, I've actually learned what to do with emotions if you can't leave them at the gate. And even suppressing an emotion around humans has a physiological effect.

[\(01:26:28\)](#):

So in the book Social Intelligence by Daniel Goman, he talks about a study where they had a person who was suppressing an emotion, interacting with a group of people who didn't know that he was stepping in emotion this person. And what they found was that not only did the blood pressure rise of the person who was suppressing the emotion, but the blood pressure of everyone interacting with that person rose also. And so when you're stepping in emotion, it takes extra energy. And horses, they are so mindful and so aware of shifts in the physiological arousal level and blood pressure and heart rate and body language of those who are interacting with the horses. So their ability to tune into the fact that your stuffing an emotion is rather significant. So I actually am going to offer your listeners an article that I wrote about this for a French magazine a number of years ago, and I've since perfected it even more about the research involving why you can't leave your emotions at the gate and then what to do about it that's constructive instead. So at the end of the call, there will be a way that people can go and just download this article and have that information and have that new perspective.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:27:50\)](#):

I'm looking forward to reading that. It's interesting you're talking about not stuffing down your emotions. So my wife has over her lifetime suffered quite a bit of anxiety, and she used to always be into looking for techniques to not have that emotion come up, to stop that emotion, stop her anxiety, and then as time's gone on, the next evolution after that is instead of trying to make it go away, to sit with it and actually feel what it is and feel what's behind it. And yeah, that's when I think the transformational work happens.

Linda Kohanov [\(01:28:27\)](#):

Well, I mean, and the horses really taught me a four point method for dealing with emotions effectively that might be helpful to your wife. What they do is they feel the emotion in its purest form. So that's what you just described, that step that rather than suppressing it or ignoring it, you feel it. Okay, but that's not all they do. They feel the emotion in its purest form. Then they get the message behind the emotion and they change something in response to that message, and then they do what's most brilliant of all. They let it go, and they go back to grazing back to life. So most humans never get past step one, suppressors never even get to step one. They don't even feel the emotion. They're trying to do everything they can not to feel it. But remember when I said that people were driving me crazy in the music world, the expressors were driving me crazy.

[\(01:29:17\)](#):

If you just express and express and express the emotion, that's not useful either. You're not getting to step two, you're not getting the message behind the emotion. And so all the so-called negative emotions are uncomfortable because they're actually course correcting emotions. They're asking you to make a shift to bring yourself back to safety or back to a better relationship with yourself or others or back to joy or back to peace. But the discomfort of fear or anger or sadness or grief or jealousy, even jealousy and envy have really important constructive messages if you really pay attention to them. So if you can deal the reason they're uncomfortable, those negative emotions is because they're asking you

to change something. And if we don't feel a little discomfort, a lot of times we're not open to change. It takes effort. And so if the emotion is causing you to feel enough discomfort that you're going to consider doing something else, then it's working for you. And that's what emotions are designed to do, and that's what courses showed me.

Warwick Schiller ([01:30:24](#)):

That's awesome. Your next question here is what do you do? Where do you go to relieve stress or where do you find the motivation or inspiration for what you do?

Linda Kohanov ([01:30:36](#)):

Maybe three major things. First of all is I like to let the horses loose on the property and just hang out with them. And I can't let them all loose at once because some of them don't get along. So I kind of let them out in shifts on different days, and then I just mill around with them and just be like a horse with them. Another thing I do is I spend time with a small herd of goats because horses, you have to be aware around 'em, right? So if I'm having a day where I can tell that my awareness is pretty low, then I'm going to go hang out with the goats for a while because they're small enough that if they get keyed up about something, they really can't cause me any serious damage. And they're such funny beings. I mean, if there's an animal that just has a sense of joy and humor in life, goats are that.

([01:31:24](#)):

And I have some dogs too, and all of that. But another thing I do is I play in compose music as well. So that is really, I have a five string electric violin, viola. It's five strings, so it has the range of a violin and a viola. And my husband is a recording artist. His name is Steve Roach, and he has over 150 albums out, but he has set up a studio in the house where we have the horses so that when he's there, he has this amazing studio and he bought me a synthesizer. And now I have this five string electric violin, viola. And I have incredible sound effects that I can add. I can make it sound like I'm playing in a cathedral if I want, or I can do, I can record aspects of my instrument and then I can run 'em through a particular kind of an effects thing, and I can drop it an octave or two so I can sound like I'm playing a massive bass or cello or something like that. And I can, there's just so many fun things that you can do with music now in terms of the level of production and equipment that we have. And I happen to have, my husband happens to be an expert in using that stuff, so I feel like I'm having fun learning some of the techniques that he's been using for years, and it's just so incredibly renewing and relaxing.

Warwick Schiller ([01:32:52](#)):

Well, I was going to say, it sounds like it's just when you're doing it, you are just doing that and your focus is right there. I think things that we do where we have to be in the experience and we can't be doing it and thinking about something else or the things that are really good for us. You know what I mean? It's like my wife and I play chess a bit, and neither of us are very good at it, but the thing about playing chess is your mind gets to do stuff, lots of stuff, but it's also doing the same stuff that you are doing as opposed to washing the dishes while your mind's thinking about a lot of other stuff. You're thinking about the same stuff you're doing rather than thinking about stuff that you're not doing, if that makes sense. And everybody might know that, and I just recently stumbled upon that idea. But anyway, yeah, I think that's what the music does for, isn't it?

Linda Kohanov ([01:34:03](#)):

Yeah. And I do know that having the music background that I had allowed me to pay attention to nonverbal elements going on in horse human relationships. And so also, we often do, in certain workshops, we'll do an experience where people make music together, and you don't have to have any experience with music. The point is to learn how to flow and listen and connect. And this is supported then by work with the horses. And we also do a workshop called Not Abra, which translates as the universe is sound. And so we have people come who are interested maybe in music and sound as a transformational experience, and we really do go into the transformational aspects of this. And so people will come and learn these skills more specifically about music and sound, but we have horse activities that then support making music. So I work on both sides of the fence that way. I might work with horses to teach people how to relax into and expand a deeper awareness of sound and music, or I can use sound and music to help people who are working with horses and other animals to learn how to connect more deeply at that nonverbal level.

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:29](#)):

And you live in Tucson? Yeah.

Linda Kohanov ([01:35:31](#)):

Yes. Well, outside of Tucson, about an hour, half an hour outside of Tucson. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:35](#)):

Okay. So my wife and I, a few years ago, went to Vale, and that was the first place. It's in Tucson, and that's the first place I'd ever had a sound bath

Linda Kohanov ([01:35:46](#)):

With

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:48](#)):

The sound, the crystal bowls and it's like, and the gongs and the stuff, and it's like, oh, it was amazing.

Linda Kohanov ([01:35:55](#)):

We actually, during the Nada Brammer workshop, we teach people how to create sound baths for each other, and we have a collection of gongs at this point that's rather amazing. And too to have four or five giant gongs around you as you're laying there, and it just vibrates your whole body and it actually shifts things. Yeah. So yeah, one of my colleagues works at Miraval now as the head of their horse department. Her name is Lucinda Vedi, and she's doing a great job.

Warwick Schiller ([01:36:31](#)):

Oh, that's awesome. Two of my previous podcast guests named Kerry Lake and another lady named Terry ler, they are leading a trip to Costa Rica in, I think it's in August, I think that I'm going on, and my son's going with me, and it's swimming with whales, and it's like the healing from the whale song. They say that vibration, when you're in the water with the whales and they sing, it just goes straight through you and realigns everything. So I'm really

Linda Kohanov ([01:37:08](#)):

Excited. Oh, excited. Oh, that sounds like a dream trip. Oh, that sounds so amazing.

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:12](#)):

Yes, that's a different type of music. Okay, next question is, and this is a good one, you've probably answered some of these questions, but what do you feel your true purpose is?

Linda Kohanov ([01:37:23](#)):

It's to find ways to help us see the invisible and hear what's beyond words.

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:33](#)):

That's very succinct. I love that. And remember, you chose these questions.

Linda Kohanov ([01:37:42](#)):

They were great questions. You let me pick several. So these were the fun ones that I most resonated with.

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:49](#)):

Sometimes I ask the questions and people look at me like, Ooh, I don't know. And I have to remind them, Hey, you asked me to ask you this question. So what's one common myth about your professional field that you wish to debunk

Linda Kohanov ([01:38:01](#)):

In the field of equine facilitated learning or equine facilitated therapy? A lot of times you have people who think that any horse can do this, can do this work, and that's true to a certain extent as long as the horse is relatively safe around humans that don't have any experience with horses. But there are actually horses that are gifted in doing this, just like some people are gifted healers or some people are gifted writers or whatever. And if you can really see the horses that you're working with as an individual and who really wants to step up and do this, there are horses that then you can have a team of horses that are working at a very high level. So just thinking, yeah, if I take some people out to a field of horses and I send them in there, they're going to have some experiences of some kind.

([01:38:56](#)):

Sometimes they're actually fairly dangerous experiences with people who don't know how to take this work seriously. But once you begin to see horses, individuals, you begin to see who really wants to do this and who's really good at it. And then they take this work to a whole new level. It's similar to George Washington. When I was studying George Washington, he actually would choose horses to go into war with him that were exceptional among horses, because when you're asking a horse to go into a bloody battle with people screaming on the battlefield and horses screaming on the battlefield at that time and bombs going off, what you need is a heroic horse. And he had the capacity to not just train heroic horses, but to recognize who in the herd of horses was the most heroic and really capitalize on that. So it's really important to see horses as individuals. Even George Washington did that, and that's what made him so successful. We probably won the war only because of George Washington and his exceptional skills that he learned from horses and his ability to seek out and train heroic horses that could take him places that no other horse could.

Warwick Schiller ([01:40:18](#)):

I know in the therapy community, I've talked to a lot, I've had a lot of different therapists on the podcast, and there's the whole wounded healer archetype, and a lot of people that are therapists have had some trauma in life that they've done some work to work through and then realized, oh, I want to help other people have the same sort of transformational experience. In your experience, the horses that are good for the therapy horses, do you think they're kind of the wounded healer archetype, they have had some trauma in the past, or do you feel that the better horses for the therapy work are the more grounded ones who've had a pretty good life?

Linda Kohanov ([01:41:14](#)):

I have both kinds of horses. And so yeah, some horses who've had a rough life and then come back around and start doing this work, they actually transform themselves and become wounded healers. They become real healers. But there are some horses that have never had a bad day in their life, hardly at all. They've been raised well. They have great relationships all through their life with other horses as well as humans, and they make exceptional healers too. So I don't think you can really generalize. One of the things that I find though is it's helpful to think from a polyvagal perspective on the horses that you're choosing for certain kinds of activities. And one of those choices that you're making has to do with people who are trauma survivors, let's say, and who are experiencing active trauma still that they haven't worked through. They'll a lot of times be attracted to the most wounded horse on the property. There's kind an emotional resonance that goes on,

[\(01:42:31\)](#):

And that can be helpful. And over time, they can learn perhaps to work with that horse when they develop more skills. But somebody who's been really traumatized, they have what in polyvagal terms is called, they're in a constant state of dysregulation. Their nervous systems are in highly dysregulated states. And so when I have somebody come in like that, I'm going to choose horses in my herd that have the capacity to co-regulate a dysregulated human being. And you can't have a newly traumatized horse co-regulate dysregulated human being, and by co-regulate, I mean a horse or a human, somebody is using their nervous system to help somebody else become more centered and regulated. And the polyvagal theory teaches us that we're supposed to be able to do that for each other. And that's why working with animals can be so healing. Because if you've been traumatized by members of the human race, it can be very hard to trust any human in the beginning.

[\(01:43:30\)](#):

But because all mammals have a polyvagal nervous system and they have this capacity to reach out and regulate a dysregulated herd member, let's say, you can get a lot of the same physiological and neurological benefits of interacting with and connecting with a horse. And if you don't trust humans, then this is a great way they can work on your nervous system. They can strengthen your nervous system, and they can act as a bridge to helping you trust humans as you progress in your healing, and also learn how to set good boundaries with humans and learn how to be assertive without being aggressive. I mean, there's all kinds of increasingly advanced skills that we learn through working with horses. So that's what I mean by that. If I have a highly dysregulated person, I'm going to put them with my stellar horse that can absolutely regulate a dysregulated human being, and I'm going to help that horse too.

[\(01:44:29\)](#):

I'm going to create those conditions so the horse doesn't burn out. But then over time, what I'm going to do is teach the person some self-regulation skills and then we're going to have that person learn over time how to work with the more challenging members of my herd. So then they learn how to use their

nervous system to co-regulate a dysregulated horse, and by virtue of that, learn how to do that in their human relationships. The polyvagal theory helps me to think about which horse am I choosing for what purpose at what time, and what progression in that person's agenda for learning or healing.

Warwick Schiller ([01:45:09](#)):

Yeah, that makes sense. When I do clinics, they're horse training clinics and people bring their horse, and a lot of times the horses are in a bit of a dysregulated state, and I've kind of got to help the people get into a more regulated state so that they can help their horse. And I was doing some clinics in Australia a few years ago, and I was talking about this in the morning working with some horses or whatever, and I took a short break. I was going to the restroom or something or other, and this lady, two ladies came up to me, she said, Hey, we've got a question. We are both police officers, and so we have pretty stressful jobs, and so our horses, you're talking about trying to get yourself so that you can help with your horse. She goes, we don't not do any of that.

([01:45:54](#)):

We just come home from work. We've got these two old horses and we just jump on 'em, go for a ride, and we feel so much better. I'm like, yeah, well, that someone's got to be helping someone. And in that case, those horses are helping you because they're old broke, really centered horses. They were saying, oh, do we need to show up a certain way for them? I'm like, someone needs to show up a certain way for someone else. And in the case of these horses in the clinic, the humans need to show up better to help the horses because the horses are in a dysregulated state. But in your case, you're in a dysregulated state, but your horse is in a regulated state and they're going to help you with that. So yeah, you wouldn't be able to come home from your police job and just jump on one of these horses in the clinic and go for a ride because one of going to die. You know what I mean?

Linda Kohanov ([01:46:42](#)):

And it's probably not the horse,

Warwick Schiller ([01:46:45](#)):

But with the horses you guys have. Yeah, the whole point of it was someone's got to be able to help someone else. And so with what you are talking about, you have the well-regulated horses helping the people who aren't as well regulated, and as they go along, then they become more regulated and then they can help the horses who are dysregulated.

Linda Kohanov ([01:47:02](#)):

Absolutely. And this is one of the key things that when people talk about a really talented horse trainer or a horse whisperer, that phrase still goes around. What I've really determined is that really what you would say is a horse trainer at the level of being called a horse whisperer, which has a mystical quality to it on some level, has the capacity to use their nervous system to regulate a dysregulated horse. So a really fine horse trainer needs to learn how to use their nervous system to stabilize and regulate dysregulated horses. And so when people come to you with challenging horses or dysregulated horses, what we do need to teach them, and this is part of what I teach, is how do I help you learn how to regulate your nervous system and then help you learn how to use your nervous system to regulate a dysregulated horse?

([01:47:59](#)):

And so that's another place where the polyvagal theory came in and gave me the vocabulary to talk about what we're really doing here. So that's part of that. One other thing that makes it all work that Ray Hunt was talking about, Ray Hunt's nervous system had the capacity to regulate incredibly dysregulated horses. And so you see certain people who've learned how to do this, and I'm sure you're really good at this too, work is that you can use your nervous system to regulate a dysregulated horse and with the people who come to your clinics, a whole bunch of people who are probably highly dysregulated at times too. So you are actually performing a service for people non-verbally that once you understand what you're doing, you can actually teach more effectively to others.

Warwick Schiller ([01:48:50](#)):

I had an experience a few years ago where 2018, I took the year off from doing clinics for a couple of reasons, but that year I started going to therapy, both group and individual therapy. And so when I went back to doing clinics at the end of the year, I didn't do any clinics that year, but there's a horse expo in New Zealand. I would present it once a year. And so I went over to New Zealand to this horse expo, and the first horse I worked with there was this dressage prospect at Lady Brings in the arena, and she's leading him around and he's worried about all sorts of things and spooking at everything. And in the past, what I would do is bring him over here and give me the lead rope, and then I will use some techniques on him to help him be a bit better.

([01:49:34](#)):

But this time she leads the horse over to me, and as soon as she gives me the lead rope, he just kind of relaxes and his nose kind of comes over to my belly sort of area, and he just kind of, and I said to the crowd, okay, I'm not sure what happened just then, but you all saw it. He was completely different as soon as she gave him to me, and I said, so let me give you, I said, that wasn't something I did right then. It wasn't like I just projected some woowoo energy at him or whatever, but I said, I will tell you what I think it is. And then I went on to describe the experiences I'd had in therapy all that year, both group and individual therapy, and how my nervous system, and also a big part of it's judgment too. But anyway, how I viewed the world was different, but that was the first time that had happened. It's happened a lot of times since. But instead of having to do things with horses to have them feel better as soon as they get the lead rope, and it's not all the time, and sometimes it's a bit of that and a bit of technique too, but it is a bit of that one other thing

Linda Kohanov ([01:50:45](#)):

That, yes, well, and what the horse was responding to was your nervous system was in a particularly regulated and centered state, and that horse immediately used your nervous system to calm down. And this is what we're designed to do. That's what our nervous systems as mammals are designed to do. And that's an important piece of what people would talk about as leadership in the horse world. It's not about being this the alpha of your two member herd. People say that a lot, and it's not all about that. Yes, sometimes you need to maybe be more assertive. I have a lot more to say about this. This is why I'm having trouble speaking is because five things in my head right now, but I'm trying to figure out the simplest thing to say in this moment. But horses are really looking for people who are in a particular state, and I can pretty much characterize what that state is.

([01:51:46](#)):

It's a state of relaxed alertness, and there are ways to get into this state, and this is a prime characteristic of a horse who would seek out your presence for leadership and comfort if you're in a state of relaxed alertness. If you're too relaxed, you're kind of disconnected from the environment and

the horse has to look out for you, right? If you're too alert, you're becoming vigilant and hypervigilant, and so you're actually going to dysregulate the horse. So they really appreciate people who are in the state of relaxed alertness, and there's certain very easy but counter instinctual techniques for getting into that state that we use in our programs.

(01:52:30):

So if you think about it, people who are looking for leaders, a lot of times we see these really flamboyant leaders that whip people into states of dysregulated frenzy. And when you whip someone a state of extreme dysregulation and fear, you can grab a hold of them and push them in certain directions because their neocortex is not online anymore. They can't think for themselves effectively. So you can push 'em around a little bit towards your own goal, but if you're going to be the kind of leader that really enhances people's lives, that state of relaxed alertness and of power that's tempered by compassion, when you're in that state, you're the one who could be of assistance and anybody can learn to do these things. You just need skills. Just think about how long we go to school to learn how to read or write or how long you go to school to be an attorney or something. All of these so-called soft skills, relationship skills, leadership skills, mindfulness skills, it just takes time. Just like any other thing you're learning. It's not a special gift, it's just something that if you take the time to learn it, you can.

Warwick Schiller (01:53:44):

Yeah, it's the yin yang thing, isn't it? Like relaxed, alertness,

Linda Kohanov (01:53:50):

Compassionate, and you can do both Power.

Warwick Schiller (01:53:52):

Yeah, power be assertive and compassionate. Yeah. The whole balancing is out. I was at, in LA a couple of years ago, was at a men's emotional resilience retreat, and there was a guy there whose wife has horses, and we were talking on the third day once he knew I was a horse guy and he said, I've heard my wife say that your horse is a reflection of you. Does that mean if you're an asshole, if your horse is an asshole, you're an asshole. And I said, no. I said, it's almost the opposite. That's like your shadow side. If you were too timid or if you were too aggressive, your horse might act a bit fearful. And if you are a bit too whatever, your horse might act a bit. It's not a direct reflection. It's almost the shadow side. And I said, the thing about horses is we have to have access to all the parts. We need to be relaxed, but alert. We need to be firm, but compassionate.

(01:54:49):

You need to have all the parts. And I think that's what's so good about them is in order, the more you want to get along with 'em, the more you have to explore those parts of your or awaken those parts of you that you don't have. And what I've found with clinics, a lot of times if someone is too timid with their horse, when they become a bit more firm, suddenly they're angry. And it's like they can't be firm without being angry, and then they have to learn to temper that. And yeah, it's all that stuff in the middle

Linda Kohanov (01:55:24):

In there. That's what makes it all so fascinating. Yeah, I mean, the horses help you integrate things that the human logical brain sees as opposites, but in reality, they're not opposites. You could be relaxed and alert at the same time. You could be powerful and compassionate at the same time. You can be

assertive and responsive at the same time, and the horses show you that you could do that, and it's actually going to help you in life. So

Warwick Schiller ([01:55:50](#)):

Yes, very good stuff. Okay, well, we're coming on two hours here. It's been wonderful talking to you, Linda. So how do people find out more about you, what you do?

Linda Kohanov ([01:56:01](#)):

Well, you can go to my website, which is equest.com. That's e E P as in Paul, o N as in Nick, A Q U E S t.com. And I have a list of a variety of things there. I also have a variety of online courses that are self-paced with lots of beautiful video and photos of horses and different tools you can use. And I do teach people how to use emotions as information in this first online course, connections 1 0 1, as well as how to use their body as a tuner, receiver and amplifier for all kinds of information, how to listen to your body. We have a technique for that. And then I also teach some simple yet very powerful co-regulation skills, how to regulate your nervous system, and then how to be able to use this to help somebody else who's dysregulated regulate. So that's in Connections 1 0 1, and I'm offering you guys a discount for that, that you'll be able to access through some of the material we'll be sharing through this site here.

([01:57:06](#)):

And a list of workshops that are coming up. I mean, one that might be the most interesting to some of the people who listen to this is really happening like April 14th through 17th, and I call it deepening the bond sentient communication for equestrians pet owners and animal advocates. And so this is about learning some emotional fitness skills, some social fitness skills, some self-regulation techniques, some co-regulation techniques for working with your horse or your dog or your cat, or if you work in a rescue of some kind with animals, these are the skills that will help them to do exactly what you did when that horse walked up to you and rested his head in your presence when it appeared that you weren't doing anything at all. This is about creating a nervous system that's going to help everyone around you to be calmer and more centered. And that's the ultimate animal whisperer skill, isn't it?

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:05](#)):

And that's an in-person thing?

Linda Kohanov ([01:58:07](#)):

Yes. That's an in-person one

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:09](#)):

In Tucson?

Linda Kohanov ([01:58:11](#)):

Yes.

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:12](#)):

Oh, awesome. And you told us about an article that you were going to share with us before.

Linda Kohanov ([01:58:18](#)):

Yes. Yeah. So I will have an article available that you guys, it'll be a P D F that you can download for free just by going to the website. And so the details of what that's going to look like aren't clear at the moment we're doing this interview, but shortly after I finish the interview, whatever I find out how this all is going to work, we will have that available. I'm not the technical expert. In other words, I'm getting my computer person to do this for me.

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:49](#)):

Yeah, we'll get all that sorted and put it in the show notes and there'll be other, find

Linda Kohanov ([01:58:52](#)):

It there. Yeah, that'll be great. But I have a lot of workshops going on all the time, but the online workshop I think is a great place for a lot of people to start because, and you don't have to go anywhere in particular, and the skills will be useful whether you're working with animals or people.

Warwick Schiller ([01:59:11](#)):

Perfect. Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining me. This has been fun chatting with you. I've been aware of you for many, many years now, so it's been such an honor to have a chat with you.

Linda Kohanov ([01:59:21](#)):

Thank you. So much work. And I've been hearing such great things about you and enjoying some of your podcasts so far, and looking forward to tapping deeper. What are some of your favorite podcasts? If you were to suggest one or two for me right now, what would they be?

Warwick Schiller ([01:59:35](#)):

Well, you've already listened to Christine Dixon and Christine was Christine's one of the people that introduced me to you?

Linda Kohanov ([01:59:42](#)):

Yeah, that's a wonderful

Warwick Schiller ([01:59:44](#)):

Podcast. Christine's one of my favorites. I just recently did one with Karen Rolfe, which was round two. It was about Karen's personal development journey because when I had her on the podcast the first time, I knew she was a dressage lady who then got into looking at horses a little bit differently. That's all I knew about her. And about 10 minutes into the podcast, she starts telling me about how she really got into the four Agreements by do mcg girlies, and she went with him to the Temple of the Sun in Mexico, and she was on the top of the Temple of the Sun with a shaman who could make himself disappear and appear at Will. And I was like, oh, you are the perfect guest for the Journey on podcast. The one I had about the second one, which only just came out recently, one of the most profound conversations I've ever had. Rupert Isaacson, who wrote The Horse Boy and did the movie, that was one of my favorites. Yeah, they have all been fun, but Rupert Isaacson's was pretty amazing. Now, Sean Cook, have you ever heard of Na Sean Cook?

Linda Kohanov ([02:00:47](#)):

No.

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Warwick Schiller ([02:00:48](#)):

Oh, you in for a treat. You need to listen to the Naan Cook one. How do you

Linda Kohanov ([02:00:53](#)):

Spell that?

Warwick Schiller ([02:00:54](#)):

N A H S H O N.

([02:01:01](#)):

And when I reported that with naan, I felt like I was witness to the sermon on the mound. I kid you not, the guy is profound, and the stuff that comes out, he's 33, the stuff that comes out of his mouth is 3,300 years old, not 33. It's like he channeled stuff. So yeah, that one's pretty amazing to listen to. I don't know much about the guy when I get him on the podcast and I said, so what exactly do you do? And the first 10 minutes, it was just him downloading something from somewhere and I was just like, so yeah, that would be a good one to listen to too. So anyway, thank you so much for joining me. It's been an absolute pleasure and an honor having you and keep doing what you're doing in the world because making the world a better place.

Linda Kohanov ([02:01:47](#)):

Thank you. So are you Warwick,

Warwick Schiller ([02:01:50](#)):

Thank you so much. So you guys at home, thanks so much for joining us and we'll catch you on the next episode of The Journey on podcast.

Speaker 1 ([02:01:56](#)):

Thanks for being a part of the journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick has over 850 full length training videos on his online video library@videos.warwickschiller.com. Be sure to follow Warwick on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram to see his latest training advice and insights.