



THE HORSE INSTITUTE®

Leadership Development Through Fresh Eyes™

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## HORSES AND “DEEP WORK”

In the dozen years we have run leadership programs at The Horse Institute, we have often joked that no one even thinks about checking their e-mail when they are walking around a herd of 1,300-lb animals. It’s no joke anymore.

Distraction is the topic *du jour* in business circles, because it affects “Deep Work” - that elusive state of concentration you need to complete a difficult project. Could horses be the answer to fixing distraction?

We are all guilty of avoiding work that requires real focus. “We use our gadgets for distraction and entertainment. We use them to avoid work while giving the impression that we’re actually working hard,” says author and journalist Meghan Daum.

Why is it a bad thing to routinely check notifications and social media platforms? What fun would life be if we were not “switched on” all the time?

Here is the problem. According to Cal Newport, author of *Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*, shallow work can permanently reduce our capacity to complete a single project at a consistently high level. Let that sink in. “To succeed with deep work, you must rewire your brain to be comfortable resisting distracting stimuli,” he adds.

And now back to horses as the antidote to distracting stimuli. What if you could experience being one with a herd of horses, being in the present as they are? As you focus and become intentional, the horses do what you ask them to do. They don’t care about your title, or how much money you made. They want to trust you. What if you could become that authentic leader with people?

That feeling of being a natural leader of horses at The Horse Institute will stay with you forever. You might just go back to the office and put your phone on airplane mode so you can get something done.

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