

22nd April 2009-04-22

Gwyneth Moss writes: Heather Smiles sent me this e-mail and I just had to put it on the site...

Hello Gwyneth

I've had a rather topsey-turvey few weeks, took voluntary redundancy - only to find the company going into administration on the day they were going to give me a cheque - so no dosh! shame, since I'd already spent a huge wedge of it on my new laptop (woohoo!) and a new saddle for my boy Brian! Ah well, all these things are meant for a reason! I am very busy, spending loads of time with horses and helping folk with tapping so I'm sure it is fate!

I helped pick up a young horse from Manchester last Friday, bit of a sad case, bought as a rescue by a lovely kind 18year old, who hadn't got a clue. Her friend had contacted Jenny (who has my horses) to ask her if she could help, as things were going downhill because of 'experts' telling this girl to 'hit it with a big stick'. The list of problems she has with this nice young horse run to two pages, luckily I hadn't read it when I started! he came out of his stable like a rocket and left a foot at the sight of the wagon with its ramp down...it took me about half an hour to get him to the foot of the ramp as he was leaping about at any slight noise, movement, or question from me.

An hour later he was confidently putting two feet on the ramp for a rub and a pause ...an hour later he was putting all four feet on the ramp, 20 minutes later he was in, turning round quietly and walking back down (rather than tanking backwards like a loon - as per...)by the end of 4 hours he was standing quietly in the waggon for a sweetie and not needing to leave. I called over the rest of the crew and asked them their advice - did we try to shut him in and take him home, with the possibility of him panicking madly once the doors were shut and (potentially) killing himself and us too(slightly overstating the point, but not by much - a crazed with fear horse in a space only just big enough to hold him, 6ft off the floor, and me stood next to him) but the alternative was to go and leave him, or try to come back another day, and spend another £60.00 on fuel.

So we shut the partitions and the big ramp/backdoor, and set off - I did my normal duty stood in the back with him, usually I sing hymms! Suddenly it occurred to me to tap for him! So I spent the first 10 minutes (jenny driving at 5 miles an hour!) to tap for *Even though I'm scared, I'm REALLY REALLY scared, I'm a good horse and Heather already loves me.....*

He almost went down a couple of times as Jenny changed gear, so I tapped *Even though I cant balance and I feel like someone has pulled the rug out from under my feet, I choose to spread my legs and find my balance* by 20 minutes later, he was coping with 30 miles an hour, roundabouts and traffic lights. I kept tapping until we got to the motorway, where I continued to tap for his fears of overtaking lorries etc, until he began to pound the floor with his front feet and chew his rope, so I tapped for his frustration *even though I really want to run, want to move my legs, want out of this nasty rattley wobbly waggon, even tho i'M CROSS, i'M so cross i'm a good horse and everyone loves me*

We left the M6 and, partly cos we all relaxed a bit, cos we knew we were on the home straight, I started tapping for, calm and relaxed, and eating my hay...suddenly he began to tuck into his net and I could leave off tapping for a bit!!! Ran a few rounds for our tired legs (I tend to empathise so much with the horse, plus just standing for several hours on me knackered legs that often I'm crocked the next day) but this time I was fine! Though my collar bones were sore!

We got home, potted quietly down the ramp and went into the field where he talked to a few of the home herd members over the fence and just.....chilled! Amazing

for any new horse, but especially one who's list of problems included being 'unable to lead in hand/unable to be turned out as gallops about madly, incompatible with other horses, strikes with front feet, bites, rears unable to be tied, cant pick feet up, aggressive and unhandable....

So who knows how much tapping worked, or how bad he will get in time when he has settled, but so far I've had not a jot of bother with him. I've turned him out with almost all of our herd (bar my skewbald cob and Jennies Shire cross Barney) both are quite bossy and I'm not sure he is big enough to cope yet....

he's been tied, brushed, brought in from field and lead out again in one hand, with Brian in the other..... rugged and unrugged
I blame tapping personally....what do you think?

I wonder what would have happened if i'd tapped for his loading worries before I tried to get him in? I've been asked to help a very scared arab into a trailer, his people are obviously worried (I had him in- but wouldn't have tried to travel him)in an hour and a bit...I think I will wort with his folks before I work with him again.

I talked to a chap today who asked if it worked with boa conscriptors (!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)said I couldn't see why not....eeeekkkkkkk

anyhow, sorry for the waffle - I was just full of the tapping news when I got home, not anything about the breakdown in the wagon on the way there, or the horse itself etc...just really excited about the potential to calm a frightened horse, as well as all the other 100's of uses I'd already thought of!!!!

With love
Heather