



Joann K. Long, President
2906 Wheeler Station Rd.
Bloomfield, N.Y. 14469
585-738-7477
www.GentleDoveFarm.com

“Lean on me!” **by Joann Long, Gentle Dove Farm**

Nope, I’m not encouraging your horse to push into you. I was recently watching the 1989 dramatized biographical film “Lean on me” with Morgan Freeman as the principal of a failing New Jersey school that he dramatically improved and was inspired by the applicable concepts to horse training. As a brief synopsis of the movie, the principal is in charge of bringing positive change to a school of disadvantaged inner city children deemed unreachable and how he develops their self-respect, motivation, teamwork, and success. It was based on a true story.

The correlation in the movie to developing a partnership in horse training was striking. We can take a young or new horse and give them the encouragement and strength to develop their trust. Not by babying them, but by perseverance and



rewarding the right thing. The principal in the movie didn’t let disrespect prevail; rather, discipline and rigorous structure helped the students develop their self-respect and confidence. Similarly, the horse can’t be allowed to be pushy; but rather, his respect for you is imperative in developing the relationship together. Communication is clear to set the horse up for success. When we reward the horse for the right

thing, even the effort, his confidence grows and we can cultivate the building blocks of improvement towards individual success.

Another concept in Lean on Me included the integral part of being a team to build a strong partnership together. The students learned to depend on one another to get through difficult challenges. They supported each other to strengthen their resolve. Having the same principle apply in horse training, we can build the fundamental foundation of the partnership team between horse and rider. As obstacles are approached, the team connects together from practice, positive experience, and reward given at the right time and for the right thing thereby improving their teamwork for new challenges ahead. Just like the students, the horse learns he is safe in the relationship, can trust, and thus, can learn more quickly. The students bonded with the principal and your horse can bond with you to make exponential progress!

The students in this true story began their journey in an environment where broken homes, drugs, bullying, and despair were the norm. The challenges to create an environment for learning were formidable! They were not expected to succeed. The principal enabled them to rise together, to learn someone believed in them, and to believe in themselves to claim their future. Our horses are teachable in an analogous sort of way. Performing obstacles goes against every instinct in the horse's brain – a formidable challenge! Their brain is screaming RUN! By becoming their herd leader, we can show them that they can depend on us to never hurt them, always lead them safely, prepare them in methodical and systematic steps to build their partnership, and develop their confidence and trust with time, patience, and mutual respect. Likewise, in both human and horse scenarios we foster the desire to demonstrate courage, confidence, and achievement!



Mounted Police horses display the ultimate trust and partnership everyday as they face the obstacle challenges of the streets. Our training at Gentle Dove Farm teaches mounted police style strategies and techniques to build upon individual success and will encourage you to create your own 'Lean on me' story. We provide Clinics, Workshops, Lessons, Lectures, and Demonstrations. Hope you can join us! See www.GentleDoveFarm.com for details! We want to help you learn the concepts of "Lean on Me"!

Happy and safe riding!

Joann K. Long
©GentleDoveFarm