



# Rethinking Round Penning

Training the Whole Horse-HorseMAREship By Missy Wryn

As I witness round penning and join-up methods as a way to connect with a horse, it seemed strange to me that the horse was forcibly scared into running around in circles in a round-pen, often to the extent of exhaustion. It didn't make sense that the horse was given only two choices, continue to look for an escape outside of the round-pen or join with the person whose behavior was frightening. Yes the trainer dropped their pressure when the horse looked at them which signaled to the horse you got the right answer (horses learn from the RELEASE of Pressure, NOT the Pressure ITSELF), only to be run around in another direction if the horse didn't follow the trainer as if on the end of an imaginary leadrope. To me it was not a choice of trust for the horse, just one choice out of fear.

Round penning or join-up as it is also called, seemed a trick of force without compassion. I was appalled by what I witnessed, yet inspired to seek a compassionate way to invoke a horse's instinct to want to be with me as their herd leader. I knew the saying "he who moves the other's feet first is in control" was where I needed to start, so I set off to observe natural herds. What I discovered was that the herd leader would move another horse's feet by taking over a pile of food or choosing to take over an area by moving off the horse with a gesture of her head, ears pinned or sometimes a nip at

the rump or shoulder if the horse was not responding. Never did I see a herd leader chase a horse relentlessly into exhaustion forcing the horse to submit. When a new horse came into the herd the herd leader moved that new horse from place to place in between nibbles of grass until the new horse demonstrated submissive behavior asking permission to be with the herd leader. Sometimes I witnessed a cocky young horse try to walk up to the herd leader with a high head out of curiosity and inexperience, only to find him run off with a few strides. The young horse simply ran off, and then came back with a lowered head quietly waiting for the herd leader to acknowledge his submissive behavior and all was peaceful thereafter. The new horse's instinct had been invoked by the herd leader moving his feet, but never with relentless fear and exhaustion.

As part of my Training the Whole Horse® methods and techniques I developed "W"holistic Joining as my initial introduction to a new horse in training ("W" stands for WHOLE horse). "W"holistic Joining invokes the horse's natural instinct to recognize me as their herd leader without the use of fear, force or exhaustion. \*Finally research is bearing out that round penning or join-up, uses inhumane fear tactics under the guise of body language. To learn how "W"holistic Joining can work for

you and your horses you can watch FREE my "W"holistic Joining Playlist on YouTube at:  
[www.youtube.com/playlist](http://www.youtube.com/playlist)

\*Links to research articles calling into question round penning and join-up methods:

- <http://www.horsemagazine.com/thm/2012/07/sydney-university-questions-monty-roberts-technique-as-pony-joins-up-with-remote-control-car/>
- <http://phys.org/news/2012-07-urge-rethink-monty-roberts-horse.html>

Internationally recognized Holistic Natural Horse Trainer and member of the Association of Professional Humane Educators, Missy Wryn provides comprehensive horse training, horse management, and effective communication workshops, clinics, and presentations.

Missy is the producer of the famed, [Watch FREE] Training the Whole Horse® and Starting Under Saddle video series, plus founder of HorseMAREship™, and DO NO HARM Productions. Missy is also the creator of the All-In-One Training Halter | Bitless Bridle, and founder of IRON FREE RIDING. For more information visit Missy Wryn's website at [HolisticHorseTrainer.com](http://HolisticHorseTrainer.com) or call toll free (888) 406-7689.