

What horses teach us about staying human in the age of AI

Lisa Podosin

Lisa Podosin is a Mensan from New South Wales.

When I was five years old, I met a horse who changed the course of my life. On a summer trip to Canada, a gentle gelding began to follow me everywhere. The couple caring for him called him my 'little buddy'. I can still feel the awe of resting my small hand on his warm neck. This powerful animal, who could have bolted or knocked me down, instead chose to walk beside me as a friend. That early, wordless bond was more than childhood magic; it opened the door to a lifelong exploration of how horses guide us, not just across physical landscapes, but through the vast inner terrain of our hearts and minds.

Today, that exploration feels more urgent than ever. Artificial intelligence is transforming our world at a dizzying speed. Notifications, algorithms, and endless screens pull us into a current of constant motion. Yet beneath the buzz of progress, many of us sense a deeper truth: we are becoming disconnected. By 2030, AI is expected to be integrated into nearly every aspect of daily life, from healthcare and education to transportation, creative industries, and even personal relationships. As machines become more capable of simulating human behaviour, our need to stay grounded in what makes us truly human becomes all the more vital.

Horses offer a bridge back to what we are in danger of losing.

They live in a state of pure, embodied awareness. As prey animals, they must. A horse can feel a fly land on its back in a windstorm. They sense our intentions before we even move. They notice whether our inner state aligns with our outward actions—a quality known as congruence. Around horses, we cannot pretend. Masks fall away. They invite us to meet them in the qualities they embody: presence and authenticity.



Lisa Podosin with Bob. (Photo by Ingrid Pullen.)

Over the years, I've seen these lessons transform people. Leaders who live in their heads soften into their hearts. Children carrying anxiety dissolve into laughter. Women who stopped trusting their intuition feel it spark alive again. Burnt-out professionals rediscover the simple relief of a deep, unguarded breath.

One moment, in particular, remains especially poignant. During a horse-connection session, a woman lay in the grass, eyes closed, while the herd grazed nearby. Slowly, a big black Percheron approached and lowered his head until his soft muzzle brushed her hair. Tears slid down her face, not because the horse did anything, but because in his presence, she finally felt safe enough to let go. That moment of acceptance and connection was a medicine no artificial intelligence could ever offer.

Being with horses reconnects us to the essence of health and aliveness: the warmth

of the sun on our skin, the earth firm beneath our feet, birdsong in the distance, the gentle nicker of a curious horse. These simple elements of the natural world are not luxuries; they are essentials for human wellbeing. They awaken the part of us that technology can never reach.

When I set out to write my book, *One With Horses*, I didn't just want to share what I've learned from a lifetime with these extraordinary animals, I wanted to deepen my understanding. So, I reached out to eleven of the world's most respected voices in compassionate horsemanship. Despite their differing methods and cultural backgrounds, they all echoed the same truth: horses bring us back to what's real. To presence. To compassion. To meaningful connection—not just with them, but with ourselves and the living world. The book weaves their insights with my own stories from decades of being with horses, uncovering the wisdom they've

been offering us all along.

In this modern age, I have noticed the most impactful part of the immersive retreats I host is simply allowing people to step away from digital noise and into the rhythm of horses, where there is nowhere to go and nothing to prove. Participants often arrive heavy with stress and leave with a lightness in their hearts, a clearer mind, and a renewed sense of belonging. The horses become guides, not just through paddocks and trails, but across the deeper terrain of self-discovery and awareness.

When we walk alongside horses, we find ourselves walking back toward the parts of us we've left behind. In their presence, life slows, and we remember the simplicity of being alive. It is here that we reconnect with our essence, a place no form of artificial intelligence can ever take us.

Moments like these—shared presence with my beloved horse Bob in the paddock, capture the essence of my book, *One With Horses*, and the retreats where people can experience this connection for themselves. Learn more at onewithhorses.com. ■

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