



Spirit of the Cat

By Lisa Ross-Williams

Most people look at me dumbfounded when I say that cats are a lot like horses. Granted, cats are supreme predators and horses the ultimate prey animal - two totally different mindsets in that aspect, in diet as well as instinct. However, there are many ways they are alike and perhaps that is why so many horse people are also drawn to cats.



Absolute Joy of Play and the Natural World



For cats and horses, play is very high on their priority list. Even wild horses and feral cats take time every day to frolic as if they didn't have a care in the world at that given moment. They both also are very drawn to their natural world, enjoying the morning sun with half closed eyes or slowly breathing in the various scents that waft in on the slight breeze. Kittens flying down the hallway at breakneck speed is very similar to a foal running and jumping in spurts, each testing their new bodies. Perhaps the message of "play more" is something humans need to do.

Importance of Social Bonds

Contrary to what I've read and heard about cats not being social or group animals, I believe the very opposite. Although cats do seek out solitude on occasion, they also, just like horses, develop close bonds with each other. The closeness of another of "one's same kind" offers

peace, security and a deep understanding of what it means to be a “cat” or “horse”. Certainly, the act of mutual grooming shows a love and tenderness between them. But neither cat nor horse is mutually exclusive with bonding, and each will develop close relationships with other family members, be they human, dog, or other animal.



Congruency in their Environment

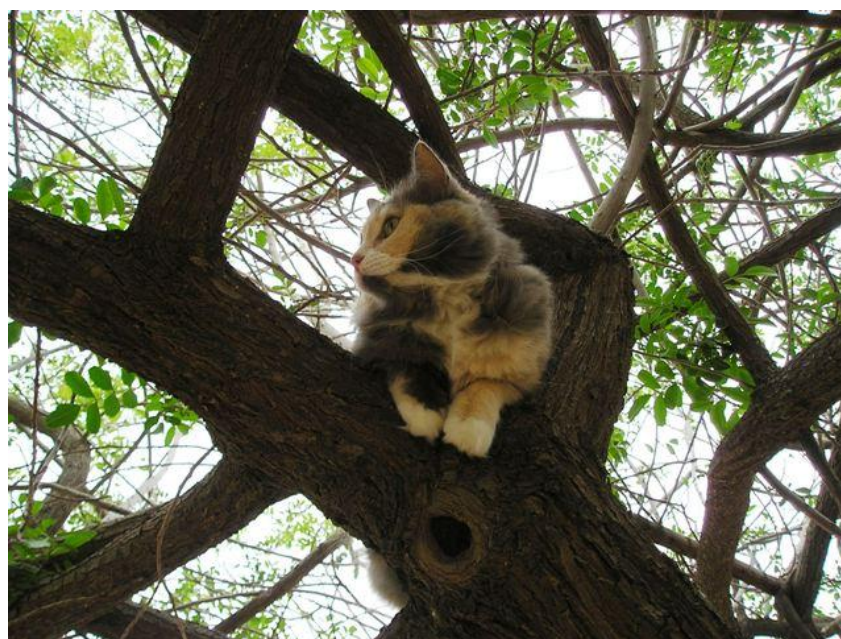
Cats and horses are extremely sensitive to their environments and the emotions of other beings in the family. For both, a natural home that runs with consistency and low stress is so very important. Being such sensitive creatures, when there is discourse in their lives it eventually shows up in a physical manifestation of disease symptoms.



Earning their Love and Respect

Finally, two other very similar aspects are their spirit, and their need for us to earn their respect, love and trust. Cats as well as horses don't automatically view you, a human, as worthy of their respect and love, unlike dogs who often freely give this, even to guardians/owners who mistreat or abuse them. A dog will often be happy and wag his tail to whomever he may live with. Cats and horses might take food and physical comfort from someone who abuses or neglects them, but they won't respect, give love, or trust.

Instead, cats and horses wait and see. Can you truly attempt to deeply understand them? Can you be a good leader by being consistent in your actions and behaviors? Do you appreciate their quirks and natural instincts? Do you go out of your way to learn and respect their spirit, and strive to offer a natural home of understanding? If so, you will be welcomed into their amazing world.



About the author:

Lisa Ross-Williams is a natural horse care consultant and host of the “If Your Horse Could Talk” webcast available at www.naturalhorsetalk.com. She is a seasoned writer, former Senior Editor of *Equine Wellness Magazine* and currently the Associate Editor of *Natural Horse Magazine*. Along with her husband, Kenny, they share their Talking Horse Ranch Educational Center in Arizona with their beloved animals.

Lisa dedicated herself to extensive research, as well as an exploration of hands-on experiences which included clinics, seminars and courses covering natural horsemanship, hoof care, dentistry, bodywork, homeopathy, iridology, essential oils and nutrition. Since then, she has earned her degree in Environmental Plant Science and has completed the Basic Homeopathy Veterinary course through the British Institute of Homeopathy. She has completed the Reiki 1

-Equine Reiki course with Kathleen Prasad. Lisa is an accomplished Natural Horsewoman who has studied extensively with many top horsemanship instructors for the past 12 years and now offers lessons as well as nutritional consultations.

Known to colleagues and friends as one who “walks her talk,” Lisa has positively influenced thousands of horse owners and grateful horses, sharing her knowledge of natural and holistic horse care. Her book on Natural Horse Care, *Down-To-Earth Natural Horse Care* will be published by Trafalgar Square in Spring 2010.

Lisa has shared a majority of her life with cats, and when four kittens from a stray cat entered her life, she decided to begin writing a book about natural cat care with a humorous twist.