



## The Soul of a Horse: Life Lessons from the Herd

By Joe Camp

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### The Soul of a Horse: Life Lessons from the Herd By Joe Camp

A surprise birthday gift plunged Joe Camp and his wife, Kathleen, into the world of horses as complete neophytes without a clue as to what horses needed or wanted. The Camps went searching for logic and sense in the rule books of traditional horse care and what they found was not what they had expected. Written for everyone who has ever loved a horse or even loved the idea of having a horse in their lives, this memoir leads us on a riveting voyage of discovery as Joe and Kathleen navigate uncharted, often politically incorrect territory on their way to achieving a true relationship with their horses.

As the creator of the beloved Benji series, Joe has spent most of his life luring us into the heart and soul of a famous dog, but now in this engaging, emotional, and often humorous story, he deftly lures us into the heart and soul of a horse. In doing so, he exposes astonishing truths and unlocks the mystery of a majestic creature who has survived on Earth, without assistance, for fifty-five million years. In a single emotionally charged moment, Camp communes with his first horse, Cash, in a way that changes him and his relationship with horses forever. In his own words, as he stood alone with his back to this horse: *The collar of my jacket was tickling the hairs on the back of my neck. And my heart was pounding. Then a puff of warm, moist air brushed my ear. My heart skipped a beat. He was really close. Then I felt his nose on my shoulder . . . I couldn't believe it. Tears came out of nowhere and streamed down my cheeks. I had spoken to him in his own language, and he had listened . . . and he had chosen to be with me. He had said, I trust you.*

Ingeniously alternating between the stories of two people thrust into an unfamiliar, enigmatic realm and a fabled herd of wild horses brought to the New World centuries ago, Joe Camp's valuable and inspiring book teaches us that the lessons he was learning apply not only to his horses but to life and to people as well—to all of us.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“One cannot help but be touched by Camp’s love and sympathy for animals and by his eloquence on the subject.”

—Michael Korda, *The Washington Post*

“Heartwarming, joyful and triumphant lightly describes this literary gem by Joe Camp, author, producer, director and, now, horseman. Not just for horse lovers but for anyone who has loved any living creature.”

—*True Cowboy Magazine*

“This book is absolutely fabulous! An amazing, amazing book. You’re going to love it.”

—*Janet Parshall’s America*

“Who should read this book? Every person who has a relationship with a horse, other animals, spouse, family, or other humans. So that includes just about everybody.”

—*The Rider Magazine*

“Joe Camp is a gifted storyteller and when he turns his talents to his newest passion, the horse, the results are magical. Few veteran horsemen can impart the insights about horses that Joe Camp, a relative newcomer, has done in his book *The Soul of a Horse*. Joe entertains, educates and empowers, baring his own soul while articulating keystone principles of a modern revolution in horsemanship.”

—Rick Lamb, TV/Radio host "The Horse Show," Author of *Human to Horseman*

“One does not have to love horses to appreciate Joe Camp’s new book, *The Soul of a Horse*. And those who don’t already love horses surely will by the time they finish reading.”

—Bloggernews

“Joe Camp’s *The Soul of a Horse: Life Lessons from the Herd* presents the history and majesty of equines in a way that truly touches the heart weaving an engaging tapestry of writings that explore the evolutionary development of horses along with Camp’s present day relationship with the horses that have chosen him as their leader. A treasure map leading to ...

### About the Author

JOE CAMP is the writer, producer, and director of all the celebrated Benji movies and programs and the creator of the canine superstar.

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Camp: SOUL OF A HORSE

### Introduction

My name is Cash. I am horse.

I have been on this planet for some fifty-five million years. Well, not me personally. My ancestors. It all

began in North America, somewhere near what is now called Utah. We hung out and evolved for forty-three million years, then we began to migrate, to South America, and across the Alaskan bridge to Asia, Europe, and Africa. And, eventually, some twelve million years after we left, we were brought back home by the Spanish conquistadors.

We've been through it all. Ice Ages. Volcanic periods. Meteor strikes. Dinosaurs. You name it. And we survived.

We've only been carrying man around for, oh, the last three to four thousand years. We've helped him farm, hunt, travel, and fight his enemies. We were helping man shape world history, winning wars for him, as far back as 1345 bc. We protected kings' dominions in medieval times, carried knights into the Crusades, fought on European battlefields all the way into the early 1900s, and helped conquer and settle the American West.

Throughout these millions of years, many of us have always remained wild and free. Even today, our herds roam free in Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia, France, Africa, the Greek Island of Cephalonia, Abaco in the Bahamas, Sable Island in Nova Scotia, the Canadian West, several states of the American West, Virginia, and North Carolina.

And, until recently, we've done it all pretty much naked and in good relationship with man. But over the past several hundred years things began to change. These changes are actually inexplicable, given that our genetics and history are widely known. You see, we are not cave dwellers. We don't like dark cozy rooms, clothing, iron shoes, heat, or air-conditioning.

Humans seem to like all that. And because they do, they presume we should like it too. But we're movers and shakers. In the wild we'll move ten to twenty miles a day, keeping our hooves flexing and circulating blood, feeding our tiny little stomachs a little at a time, and keeping our own thermoregulatory systems in good working order.

Think about it. Our survival through all those millions of years has built a pretty darned determined genetic system. And an excellent formula for survival. We are what you humans call prey animals, flight animals. We are not predators, like you. We have survived because we freak out at every little thing, race off and don't look back. We are also herd animals. Not just because it's fun to be around our pals, but because there is safety in numbers. And being prey animals, we consider safety just about the most important thing. But our idea of safety is not the same as yours. Our genetic history does not understand being all alone in a twelve-by-twelve stall. Even if it's lined in velvet, in a heated barn, it's away from the herd and by no stretch of the emotion or imagination is that a safe haven! Stress is all we get from such an experience.

Stress. Big-time!

Have you ever seen one of us, locked in a stall, pacing . . . pawing . . . swaying . . . gnawing? That horse is saying, Let me outta here!! I need to move! I need to circulate some blood!

And about these metal shoes nailed to our feet. Have you ever seen a horse in the wild with metal shoes? I don't think so. There is nothing more important to a prey animal than good feet. And ours have helped us survive for millions and millions of years. Rock-crushing hard and healthy.

But once upon a time, back in medieval days, some king decided he would be safer if he built his castle and fortress up on top of a high hill or mountaintop. He still needed us to fight his wars, and move things and people around, but up there on top of the hill, there were no pastures like down in the valley. So he put us in

small holding pens where we had to stand around all day, in our own pee and poop, and guess what happened to our feet. It wasn't the moisture so much as the ammonia. Ate our feet up! So when they'd take us out onto those hard stone roads . . . well, you can imagine.

The king's blacksmith came up with the idea of nailing metal shoes onto our hooves, to keep them from disintegrating when pounding the stony roads. There was a much simpler, healthier solution, but, unfortunately, it escaped the king and his blacksmith. So all the king's men and all the king's horses went down the hill . . . and all the king's peasants, living in the valley, where their horses were out in the field, happy as clams with strong and healthy hooves, saw these shiny, newfangled pieces of metal on the king's horses, and what did they say? Surely the king knows best! We must have some of those shiny metal things for our own horses!

And so it went for generations.

You humans are funny that way. And you say we follow the herd.

Joe and I have had long discussions about all this and he seems to be getting it. So I can shamelessly recommend what follows. Joe has spent much of his life trying to lure you into the heart and soul of a dog, and now he's trying to lure you into the heart and soul of a horse. For it is there that he first began to comprehend the vast differences between us and you, and the kind of thinking that can bridge that gap and bind us together in relationship. My herd mates and I have taught him well. And, believe it or not, the philosophy behind everything he has learned doesn't apply to just horses but to how you humans approach life as well. So whether or not you have a relationship with a horse, I think you'll find this journey of discovery fascinating. I did.

And I already knew the story.

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## The Herd

The wind was blowing out of the east, which made the beast uneasy. It wasn't normal. And anything that wasn't normal made him uneasy. A stray sound. A flutter of a branch. The wind coming from the east.

But there was a scent on this wind. A familiar scent. One embedded in the big stallion's being for millions of years. He spun on his heels and sure enough, there it was, easily within sight, apparently not realizing the wind had shifted. The stallion screamed to the matriarch, who wheeled in flight.

Like one, the herd followed, racing away at lightning speed, the great stallion bringing up the rear. They ran without looking back for just over a quarter of a mile before the leader slowed and turned.

The predator, a small female cougar, had tired. She had been betrayed by the east wind. The horses had gotten away early, and now she was turning back.

The stallion's senses had saved them this time. The entire herd was alive and well because those very senses had helped their ancestors survive for some fifty-five million years. Prey, not predator, the horse must suspect everything. Every movement. Every animal. Every smell. Every shadow. All are predators until proven innocent. By taking flight, not staying to fight, they survive.

And by staying together. Always together.

How well the big stallion knew this. He had watched his mother, in her old age, lose this very special sense and drift away from the herd. It was excruciating. His responsibility was the herd. To keep them together, and moving. But his mother's screams in the distance would live with him forever.

The matriarch began to lick and chew, a sign that she was relaxing, that all was well. The stallion took her signal, and one by one, the herd began to graze again, nipping at the random patches of grass and the occasional weed. But they wouldn't stay long. The matriarch would see to it. She would move them almost fifteen miles this day, foraging for food and water, staying ahead of wolves and cougars. And keeping themselves fit and healthy.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Tami Anders:**

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book entitled *The Soul of a Horse: Life Lessons from the Herd*? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have different opinion?

#### **Susan Rogers:**

Now a day people who Living in the era just where everything reachable by talk with the internet and the resources included can be true or not call for people to be aware of each data they get. How individuals to be smart in obtaining any information nowadays? Of course the answer then is reading a book. Looking at a book can help individuals out of this uncertainty Information particularly this *The Soul of a Horse: Life Lessons from the Herd* book as this book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the information in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

#### **Elizabeth Daugherty:**

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**Viola Ball:**

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