

'Jimmy's Story'

Yvonne Allen



'Jimmy' & Yvonne

The morning traffic is moving slowly along Hwy 1# as I head out to see my horse. Relaxing into thought about the many years I have been doing this drive, I once again feel chills running through me. The chills are


actually goose bumps. For me this is a sign that interesting and creative thoughts are coming my way. I

first experienced this rush of energy when I thought about the days Jimmy and I spent together learning healing techniques that would bring him back to good health. Ultimately, these thoughts transcended into the development of the most exciting endeavor of my life and this was to create a natural equine healing and therapeutic business. We have come a long way. Today, I continue to maintain my horse as I learned through all my studies and experience, naturally.

I wish I had more time to spend with him today, however my schedule is limited. In the past, a good day together included long rides through Campbell Valley Park or an incredible ride in the arena. Jimmy's body would feel like it was floating beneath me. Things certainly have shifted these days. Today, I will just play with him in the arena and give him a nice massage. One might wonder if this is considered to be a productive day spent with your horse; I have found that days we just hang out together are often the best. Being in relationship with your horse and not asking any more from them other than just being a friend can build a bond like none other. I would say it is likely where horses appreciate us the most as they absolutely love to hang out, socialize and graze their days away.

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have Jimmy in my life after meeting him, his registered name was the same as the fine dining restaurant I worked in at the Pan Pacific Hotel in downtown Vancouver, B.C., The Five Sails. My "Five Sails", better known by his barn name Jimmy, was the first horse I went to look at once I had determined to have a horse in my life. At 28 years of age, my first horse was a raced, three year old, 16.3 hands TB gelding. We were not exactly the best combination to start given our skill level and experience, however we made out quite well together. I attribute this to both being totally naïve and having no fear. Our first rides together were spent on miles of park land, simply enjoying our time together.

When my horse first started presenting less than optimal health, I looked in many directions to aid him to recovery. He was body sore, so my first endeavor was learning how to alleviate this condition through training and education with acupressure and other acupuncture related therapies. One specific incident I will never forget and before I had any formal training, happened on a day I printed out a treatment protocol for the West Nile Virus

I found on a holistic equine healing reference web site. This was in 2001, when the West Nile Virus first appeared creating fear and commotion. (The WNV was never a problem for horses in British Columbia back then nor is it now to my knowledge. I only used this chart to learn about the various acu-points on my horse's body). I decided to try it out, having no idea how he would respond to these points being stimulated. Jimmy was munching on some hay and I began to squeeze the very end of his tail as specified on the chart for the treatment. The result was incredible! It had been a long time since Jimmy's eye's lit up as they did, so clearly full of energy and life force. I continued to squeeze the end of his tail while his connection to this trigger point became stronger and stronger. He stopped eating and cranked his head and neck around to look and observe what was going on. The gas he released did not stop for at least five minutes! I kept on squeezing until this response subsided and knew at that moment this kind of treatment would help him recover. It was an emotional experience looking back, and I realized I had started a journey to learn and recognized intuitively the many more beautiful moments I would experience, assisting other horses to heal.

Years later and after many other courses taken in horse therapy and equine body work, I see my horse in a field with friends enjoying his days. There were many ups and downs that I did not foresee then. At times, we seemed to go completely against the grain of traditional horse care. Ultimately the choices made only led my horse into a more natural lifestyle which he fully thrives in today.



When Jimmy first came into my life, I remember horses in boarding stables were given frequent vaccinations. It seemed every three to six months some kind of shot was injected into their systems. As a horse owner, I was happy to follow boarding agreement protocols - I trusted those that cared for my horse.

By the time 9 years had passed, my thoughts on vaccinations had shifted. I promised Jimmy in 2000 he would never receive another vaccination in his life. I was quite certain many of his physical problems were due to a

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condition called vaccinosis caused by too many vaccinations.

In late winter 2006, I was informed Jimmy was included in a vet farm call and had been given a flu/rhino shot and the WNV vaccine. I wasn't happy and almost drove off the road when I heard the news! Ultimately, Jimmy did not have any notable adverse reactions from the flu/rhino and WNV vaccine outside of swollen lymph glands which we dealt with. I also knew from the get go that this was a complete misunderstanding as the barn owner knew that I preferred my horse to be naturally kept (without horse shoes and blankets etc) however it was never made clear that he was not to be given any vaccinations. I also realized I was more affected by the experience than Jimmy. It has been said a horse (or other domesticated animal) will pick up on their owner's emotions and react to and even mirror them. Well,

Jimmy did just that. When I was around, he would present ill health. When I was not around (or even just around the corner) he would liven up. There was something to be learned here about being over concerned for my horse, or anything else in life for that matter. I got it!

A month later I had a vivid dream... my horse's body was slamming up and down from the sky to the earth. The dream woke me around 6:30 am and I quickly got my stuff together to spend the day at the farm. I could feel inside something was not right with Jimmy. When I arrived a few hours later, the morning caretaker let me know Jimmy had been showing colic symptoms and did not eat any of his breakfast which was highly unusual for him. He also wanted to stay lying down and would not make any effort to get up. Eventually Jimmy rose and was walked to the field and kept under close observation. He appeared to have recovered. Carrots were happily accepted and we went for a long walk Jimmy seemed to enjoy. Later that afternoon I was reminded that all horses were due for their regular de-worming. This did not sit right with me. I explained to the barn owner I could not give him the de-wormer because it was an all chemical formula and could cause colic. She completely understood and I set out to

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research other natural methods for de-worming my horse.

We had great success using natural herbal blends and over time I considered it to be just like a body cleanse for people. This just made sense to me. I educated myself on parasites and realized by doing regular fecal samples I could understand what was going on in his intestinal track where all kinds of stuff can flourish. As I became more knowledgeable I began to wonder about other horses routinely chemically de-wormed. Could it be possible some of these horses might have become resistant to these pharmaceutical products regularly given? In all my years in the equine industry, I never observed regular fecal examinations being done to test to see if the horses even needed to be de-wormed on the regular de-worming schedule; it was just a normal protocol followed and each horse was treated the same as the next one.

I got into the routine of doing herbal parasite cleanses every three months for Jimmy. I hired a natural health care practitioner to come to the farm to train me on a new massage therapy device I had purchased. During the training I noticed the practitioner take some small, dark colored bottles labelled melaleuca oil from her brief case. I thought she might have noticed a cut on him somewhere and was going to apply some oil to it but was I in for a big surprise. She walked over to Jimmy, put five drops of the oil in her hand and offered him to smell it. Before I knew it he was intently licking the oil from her hand and when he seemed to be satisfied, she turned and walked away from him. Jimmy obviously was not done with her yet as he pushed hard against the cross ties resting against his chest, wanting to follow her. She came back and repeated the offering of this oil until he had taken in about 25 drops. It did not take me long to understand he was actually self medicating himself. His whole personality and energy shifted into an alert and happy horse. I was in awe of this experience for the rest of the day. I knew for certain both he and I would be seeing more of these essential oils.

The following day I was excited to go back to the farm after putting in an order for more oils. I was certain this whole episode with the melaleuca oil would be repeated. I brought out the small stock I had at home and when I arrived at the barn offered him more of the melaleuca. I was quite surprised when his head went straight up into the air and appeared it would not be coming down any time soon as long as this oil was in my hand. I decided to test a different oil on him. I randomly picked spearmint from my bag and when he caught the scent, he lowered

his head and intently smelled the new oil. He licked about 20 drops of oil from my hand and once again demonstrated an emotional release, his eyes softened and his body released the tension he had previously been carrying. I repeated this over the next couple of weeks every other day when I went out to visit him and finally, he had had enough. We went through this exercise one more time and his choice of oil was peppermint. He only wanted 5 or 6 drops and only for a few days.

*****Over the past 11 months, Yvonne used only therapeutic essential oils for Jimmy's deworming program. His most recent fecal test done in Dec/07 was negative for all parasites horses are normally chemically dewormed for. His Dec/06 test had shown positive even after a regular chemical deworming**

Since this experience I became so intrigued I decided to study and learn about the oils. I had heard about Raindrop Therapy for horses and was fortunate to find training for this. I had already started incorporating the oils into my massage work for both horses and people alike and the results were impressive.

As my studies deepened I became inspired to learn more about the emotional aspects of essential oils. I became a firm believer after walking into barns, introducing oils to different horses and observing their responses. I visited a training barn for upper level dressage horses. I found these horses to be emotionally balanced, healthy, well trained athletes. To my surprise, each one showed a definite interest in the marjoram which is great for sore and over-exerted muscles. Their sniffing back and forth from nostril to nostril and their licking and chewing clearly demonstrated to me these horses shared similar traits. They were very much at ease in their environment.

I began using essential oils on Jimmy to enhance his well being. I studied blended essential oils and came across a case study about a horse that was going into competition, however the training had not been completed and the horse was in fact, very green. The rider used a blend of oils both on himself and the horse that would bring out their highest potential. The owner massaged the oil into the ears of his horse before they would ride and let him sniff it when he chose to. Ultimately, they placed very well and there was no doubt on the horse owners part their performance had indeed been enhanced by the use of this particular blend of essential oils.

I was so excited about this case study that I decided to try this oil blend on Jimmy. Jimmy was looking quite elegant from a good brushing and his new tack looked very sporting on him. Before heading to the arena, I took a moment to connect with him and introduced the essential oil blend. He was interested! He sniffed it going

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Yvonne Allen & '5 Sails'

*aka
'Jimmy'*

Yvonne Allen is a member of the
**Canadian Association of Holistic Equine
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and
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Yvonne services Vancouver and the Lower Mainland
area providing massage therapy for horses.

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from one nostril to the other and became quite entranced with it. I took 10 drops of the oil blend in my hands, rubbed them together and gently applied the oils on the inside and outside of his ears. The aroma from this combination of oils was amazing! I found myself burying my nose inside his ears to get my own benefits from the scent he had been infused with. Once in the arena, Jimmy pranced off into a trot. No lack of energy today. A few minutes later once his body had warmed I noticed his stride beginning to lengthen. I admired his steadiness. His focus was intense on the work he was being asked to do and I could see him starting to work harder and harder on his own with no prompting. By this time I expected to see this beautiful trot turn into a canter as the extended trot he was doing can be challenging and difficult for horses, especially if they are not conditioned to it. As I tuned more into him, I wondered if the essential oils were working for him. Normally he would usually break into a canter to get away from the more difficult pace, but not today. I was now as enthusiastic as Jimmy appeared to be and the rest of our work together that afternoon was phenomenal! My horse was happy, he knew he had done well in his exercises and was pleased with himself that he had pleased me so much!

Well, this new day did not bring the rain or snow but definitely the winter chills were in the air. I found Jimmy resting peacefully with his herd members in the far corner of the field. Approaching him, he gave a little nicker and invited me to put my hands on him which I did. His winter coat had grown in so thick; it must have been almost three inches long. As I rubbed my fingers through his fur, I buried my nose into his soft and shiny coat. The scent of his body resonated deeply within me and this moment became one of reflection. Jimmy started to yawn over and over again, obviously enjoying this touch. This happens often between us and I consider it to be a healing response he is experiencing which is then transcended through to me. I practice Hatha Yoga and have learned through Savasana (dead body posture), that this is where the healing occurs from postures previously

done. We are healed through this stillness and I have come to learn that miracles in life do happen when they come from these moments of stillness. I believe it is the same for the horse when we do a massage or other therapies for them. I teach in my Equine Shiatsu Massage Short Course that when ones horse starts to demonstrate the yawning, licking and chewing, that they are to take both their hands off the horse's body and allow them to go through their own processing. It might take a couple of minutes but their horses will definitely let them know when they are ready for more of their hands on treatment.

I once again feel the shivers running through me as I reflect back on this day. Staying close to my horse without taking my hands off him, I move around to his other side. This closeness has developed over many years and it still gets stronger every day. We are old friends now, having spent a lifetime together, experiencing so much. The feelings and emotions of going through our fears and uncertainties together, sharing our joy and love and never tiring of what a new day will bring is all a part of who we are now. I can honestly say that knowing we are able to more closely connect through the essential oils has only enhanced our relationship. The oils take us back centuries and have proven since the beginning of time that they work deeply within our core, be it physical, mental or spiritual. My horse recognized this and taught me the importance of learning more as I am doing today. Ultimately though, I must say that my true master is my "Five Sails". Through him I sometimes feel like God is speaking to me and it comes when I least expect it. It can be through a certain look that he gives me and I will then feel a warm glow in my heart, knowing that a deeper connection has been made to my source energy. For the reasons he came into my life I can not deny, for I know them all today. I am optimistic about our future together and even though he is 20 this year, there is no doubt in my mind about his yet to be revealed "highest potential". I look forward to sharing many more days ahead together with him, exploring these possibilities.