

Leadership, Confidence, Trust

By Karen Scholl

Every woman knows the feeling of walking alone in a strange place when the realization of our vulnerability takes over our mind. Our heart pounds, our vision scans, and our pace quickens until we move into a place of safety.

Now consider the horse, driven by nature to bond with other horses for the same reason—for survival. Imagine how horses must feel to be on alert every moment, prepared to flee at the slightest hint of danger.

Go back to that strange dark street, but now you're walking with a trusted friend that happens to be ex-military trained in hand-to-hand combat. Your friend is tall, athletic and street-wise. It's the same situation, but under different conditions you feel relaxed and confident instead of that awful feeling of survival mode when you're alone.

Horses feel the same confidence when a lead horse is present. We've all seen horses become extremely upset when the other horse is taken away, shifting mentally into survival mode. Their perception is that without that other horse they are now vulnerable as if they were alone on that strange dark street with only predators around.

With this awareness, how can we become that same competent friend our horse wants and needs us to be? What skills must I demonstrate to earn the trust of a prey animal?

It is my experience that by establishing our *leadership* position, we gain *confidence* in our skills so our horse can have absolute *trust* in our communication, even when things get scary—no, especially when things get scary.

Learning what this means is a fascinating study, one that I am dedicated to help women understand since we're not usually taught leadership skills from an early age. I strongly encourage women to consider the horse's point of view in everything we ask of them.

If we're expecting our horses to live outside their comfort zone, maybe we can take a step out of ours to gain more insights and develop the skills our horses so desperately need from us.

Keep learning, and enjoy *your* journey!

Karen Scholl is a horse behaviorist and clinician, teaching "Karen Scholl, Horsemanship for Women" throughout the U.S. Learn more about this empowering program by visiting karenscholl.com or call for a free brochure at 888-238-3447.