

The principles of Mio

Mio was a pony, who for most of his life worked as a tourist horse at High Chaparral, a western-inspired theme park. At the age of twenty he was retired and sold to a family, who in turn contacted me to find out more about how he was doing.

At our first meeting, he described how he had met an incredible number of people during his time as a tourist horse. All these experiences had given him invaluable insights into the relationship between horses and human. And he now wanted to share these.

After some time, it was decided that Mio would move here, and he lived on Friskeröd Farm until his death at the age of thirty-one. During this time, he shared what came to be his trademark; *The principles of Mio*.

The only way to truly absorb this teaching is to practice it and experience it with body and mind wide open. But I will still try to summarize the basics. Both from Mio's own perspective, and as described by the horses who have taken up his memory threads and carried the message forward.

Necessity to surrender

"To sit on a horse's back is to take part of a force that is greater than yourself, and that you can never fully control. Just like life itself." This was one of the first things Mio expressed. The importance of surrendering and the vulnerability that follows. Allowing life to take place. To let more vital force into the movement. To surrender - to participate fully.

The balance between giving oneself away and to participate fully

The rider's balance point is placed just below the navel, like a moving ball. Everything below this point is left to the horse. The rider's legs are not used for propulsive purposes and instead become part of the horse. While accepting that you cannot control anything, from a larger perspective - you also have full responsibility for your own actions.

The upper body is filled by the person, the self - the synthesis of body and soul - so that horse and rider can coexist in a perfectly equal encounter.

One vertical and one horizontal spine

Mio talked a lot about the importance of an uninterrupted flow of vital energy through the spine. And how this flow also affected the openness of thoughts and feelings. The meetingpoint of the horse's horizontal spine and the rider's vertical one - like a cross. The fusion of two nervous systems. The image of the horse and man as a centaur. Two consciousnesses, in one common body.

The importance of changing people's consciousness

Mio was clear that the purpose of all this is basically to help change people's consciousness, which would be a real contribution to a more empathetic world.

Opening aids

"A horse seeks an opening, never a closed space." An exigent aid aims to exclude other alternatives. And in this way, a path is formed that is not based on voluntary action. An opening aid facilitates the movement but has no controlling function. The rider's task is to allow the horse's movement to propagate through his own spine, so that nothing interrupts the flow between them. Neither party is diminished, neither is above or below the other. Next, the movement and expression of the rotating joints are made conscious; hip and shoulder/elbow respectively.

To stretch the diagonals

Rotating the hip joints outwards opens the way forward. And the diagonal movement is promoted by opening one side's hip joint, while the opposite side's shoulder joint does the same. It's about opening up to the world and increasing space, on the inside.

Above all, it is about daring to be present, in your own life. In this way, we may also dare to meet others, without trying to control, direct, or limit the relationship.

The self-supporting horse

The diagonal stretch also helps to promote the horse's balance. In order to carry a rider in an ergonomically correct way, the horse needs to angle its pelvis and move its own center of gravity backwards. When this happens, the back will stretch, with the help of the strength in the trunk. And when the horse thus finds its natural rise, the withers is raised slightly and the space between the shoulder blade is widened. The thoracic spine and neck arches and freedom of movement increases.

To be reflected through the encounter with the other

When horse and human find the balance of presence and surrender in relation to each other, the clarity of the encounter between them increases. The relationship is not about compensating or covering something up. The concept of obedience ends. Enforcing one's will, or achieving specific goals becomes less relevant. The way of Mio is characterized by the fact that one is never alone. All practice always happens in relation to other living beings. One encounters oneself through the reflection of the outside world. *Who are you? Who am I?*

The stretch boundary

In the transformation of consciousness, and in order to reach beyond what has been known so far, one must go right up to the very limit. The dividing line between what is hitherto known and experienced - and what does not yet exist in one's conceptual world. This boundary is moved and extended by daring to stand still in the middle of it. It cannot be forced. If one backs off, the space will diminish over time. And if you try to rush past the limit, you will only have to start all over again. Standing firm requires courage and perseverance. And we need to help each other. The stretch boundary can both be physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

The empathic gaze

Marion Rosen once said that you can never heal another person. The only thing you can do is help create a space where the other person can be fully themselves. Mio believed that a healthy individual will always fill the space offered. So how can we help to maintain this opportunity? An important component here is the empathic gaze. A spark of the unconditional love that permeates all living things. Seeing and experiencing the world from a state of total compassion. Free from judgment. *I see you*. If you can fully experience the other person's world from the inside, condemnation becomes impossible. And in the light of the empathic gaze, one may finally dare to face oneself. And then perhaps the deep and honest self-examination that is the basis of all change will occur.

Lack of conditioning

Mio put it this way: if you take away the punishment, you also take away the reward. You're really taking away all the purpose, other than the experience itself. You can't have any expectation or be driven to achieve specific goals - if any of this is to be possible.

Will is replaced by longing. And the driving force is about enhancing the experience of life.

Indirect/micro movements

Further openings can be made by small, peripheral, indirect movements. Mio reasoned that it was often counterproductive to try to overcome fears or other limitations by fighting them. This would only increase the already rehearsed defenses, both physically and mentally/emotionally. A more effective way to break patterns and find new pathways may be to offer an alternative. A variation as small as possible, which cannot possibly be perceived as a threat. None of this will be relevant, unless one first surrenders in the relationship, so that horse and human are one. The micromovement then becomes an example of what is possible. Standing firm, as in the encounter with the stretch boundary, combined with the use of many small keys, creates a way towards change - both on an external and internal level.

Interbeing

Man seems to be the only creature that relates to a linear concept of time. Here our hierarchical systems and a multitude of other contradictions are created, as only one truth - one conceptual world - can exist at a time. One excludes the other, thus creating a world based on opinions. We influence the world around us by trying to control it, unaware of how this is perceived by those around us. A micromovement does not work by being perceived first by the other, who then chooses to respond to the signal. A micromovement unlocks the boundary between linear and non-linear time - and so the time sequence disappears. Thought and action become one. The effect of the movement occurs at the same time as the execution; in both parties. An indirect movement leads to a direct response. Interbeing can never be guided by personal gain, as that would require a separation - which in turn makes the empathic encounter impossible.

The expansion of the self

To take full responsibility and stay centered, and at the same time surrender to the world. To let the self expand to include all life. There are two kinds of emptiness. The opening, when the self - like a shell - is emptied of all content. The pure reflection. *The way of compassion*. The other emptiness, filled with itself, gives place to nothing. And around this emptiness, like frosted glass, the person is created who lacks anchoring in the soul; the human ego. On this dividing line our consciousness remains, and we always have a choice. Will our actions bring us closer to the source, or further from it? We can reverse our destructive behavior and break the isolation, if we choose to. Humankind as trustee and co-creator. It takes practice, and we need constant reminders. But it's not impossible. Mio devoted his whole life to help humans. He never gave up hope in our ability to change.

When Mio passed away, his memory threads were passed on to other individuals. Amongst others the Hashemite horses in Jordan. Here is their interpretation of the principles of Mio:

- * They began by conveying an image of a starry sky, as a symbol of their history in time. Like a myriad of glittering, illuminated messages. Like a tremendous gift to humankind. This help never ceases to rain down on humanity, as blessings. They are always there; you just have to find them.
- * Then you see a picture of people moving back and forth. They create their lives in a reality they can only partially understand. And perhaps they have forgotten how gently and lovingly they were put here on earth? We create ideas of fear, punishment, and suffering. Like a detour back to the original kindness from which we came.

Then we begin to explore the world, perhaps with the intention of understanding more of it. And when we do, we may discover that there are no limits. Everything seems possible, or permitted - including making rules that forbid things. All limitations are also possible. Everything is possible. This is mind-blowing. And when realizing this unlimited freedom, the human begins to believe in *themselves*. They return from their journey of discovery in the external world, and instead begin to believe in their own thoughts - as an absolute truth. This creates the illusion of man as the master of all other life. We believe that we can rule over ourselves and others, over this whole world and over how we perceive reality. We give ourselves the prerogative of interpretation.

- * They return to the image of how gently we are placed in this reality. This underlying gentleness is so subtle that it is barely perceptible. It's easy to take it for granted. Yet the gentleness itself, seems to want it to be this way. As if it keeps itself slightly hidden, in some mysterious way, hoping to be found. If anything at all could be called "the will of the creator", it would be this gentleness, and the quiet wish to be found.
- * In the same playful, gentle and curious way, these horses' messages are often presented in the form of riddles. Sometimes they are extremely obvious, as if they were placed right in front of your eyes. In other cases, it is the other way around. They will reveal themselves in very different ways, depending on who is looking for them. As with everything else in this creation, change is constant. Right and wrong may exist only in relation to each other. Darkness and light can only be seen as definitions. Perhaps there are no absolute truths. Instead, they describe something that could be seen as universal principles - in line with the cycles of nature. And the principles of Mio could be an example of this.

The principle of allowing. The Creator created creation by allowing it to be. By allowing it to *be*. And allowing in this case has nothing to do with power. It's more about allowing space for *being*. It is not in the nature of the creator to prevent, control, or intervene. Everything is allowed. There are no demands or expectations, and no ownership. Allowing all living beings to be who they are at their core. To allow personal expression and the possibility of fulfilling one's purpose in a larger context. Allowing, as a fundamental principle. *I let you be, I let me be.*

The principle of joy. When the individual is allowed to be, the flow of vital force is also maintained. The experience of this could be described as an underlying joy. The joy of life - which is also *the life force*. "The difference between moving and being moved." Movement arises from within, by its own power. The joy and the will to live. It is like the immediate experience of a micro-movement, the contact that occurs when linear time dissolves. Once you've experienced that joy, you don't need anything else. That is the reward. You are no longer looking for anything beyond the experience itself.

The principle of letting go and being lost. Allowing creation to *be* and the joy of experiencing it, needs a space - a living space. And whatever stands in the way of opening up this space will sooner or later have to be demolished. At first, it may be mostly a matter of getting rid of things you don't need. But life is merciless in its progress. Eventually, walls, floors, and ceilings collapse. All restricting definitions disappear. The self seeks intimacy, the ego seeks confirmation. Individual identity dissolves to make room for something bigger. The expansion of the self, as Mio describes. Consequently, when the foundations of one's perception of reality begin to shake, it is difficult to recognize oneself. This is where we need to help each other. A few words, or a gesture, may be enough. Anything that brings courage and a glimmer of hope.

The principle of interbeing. Being one with creation. Self-centeredness has been replaced by openness. The dissolving of time. Everything happens simultaneously. Thoughts are experienced with an immediacy, with no time difference between idea and action. The self accommodates the world, and vice versa. There is no longer any difference between the dancer and the dance. It is like a state of prayer, or wonder. One has found the hidden gentleness. And you sense the endless energy of expressing and experiencing compassion - even though it can never be owned, or used for personal purposes. This is stepping into creation, on equal terms, and coexist with all other life.

With these insights, you return to your everyday life - and start practicing. Because there are no shortcuts here. Both Mio and the Hashemite horses saw a future in which humans turned to a kinder creator and creation. **The way of compassion.** Violence, hatred, and fear can only be repeated, and never create anything new. But this is something that every individual must discover for themselves, within. In this way, the collective reality changes, one step at a time. It takes a great deal of patience, and we must constantly remind each other.