Reflective Roundpen Exercise / Explore Hearts' Desire (Reflective)

Objective:

This reflective exercise with horse is about unlocking the intelligence of the heart as an organ of perception, that has its own wisdom, opinions and agenda.

By accessing the heart's desire, the person learns to access a goal set by the body/heart and then follow and support it.

This is important in discovering one's authentic calling and deeper motivational gifts, especially in times of transition; sometimes the body/heart can be a deeper navigator through uncertainty than the thinking brain.

In this exercise, pay attention to the wording you choose to introduce it. If the phrase "heart's desire" risks evoking too much sentimentality or scepticism for a certain target group of clients, do not name the exercise beforehand. For this reason, the exercise at Eponaquest is usually called "Reflective Round Pen Exercise".

During the exercise, instead of "heart's desire", you can refer to "the purpose/direction of your heart", and emphasise that it has been established that the heart is a sensory organ with its own perception and intelligence, which sets its own agenda, indicating what is needed to tap into your full potential in life.

Setup:

Take the time to properly explain this exercise to the client, preferably before you get to the horses. Once you are with the horses, their attention may be distracted and therefore important information may not stick.

1. The client gets to choose the horse they want to work with.
2. Safety: The client should stay on his/her feet, bring a "boundary device," and should not put himself/herself between the horse and the fence.
3. The desire to explore in the session comes from the body-scan process and so there is no point in establishing or planning it in advance.
4. The exercise takes a certain amount of time, and you indicate when this time is up. Sometimes the horse indicates when the session has ended (for example, by no longer engaging and standing at the fence) - we always honor the horse's wishes first.
5. The client can speak to you if they have questions during the session.
6. In Reflective sessions, try not to be instructive during interventions. Remember, never tell the client what YOU think they are feeling or experiencing, or what they should do next. If they ask you to, ask a counter question: What was your own experience? How are you experiencing this yourself? Our goal as coaches is to help the client connect with their own inner compass, to find their own way forward.
   Clients may of course ask for your help when they get stuck and their inner compass indicates that they should ask for help to get out of it (e.g. the questions for the emotion Frustration). In that case, you may offer them a tip or suggestion.

Materials:

For client:

- Pen and paper for notes
- Boundary device

For coach:

- Clipboard
- Script
- Pen and paper for notes
- Boundary device

SCRIPT

Step 1: Preparatory body scan

Be prepared to take notes for yourself of the client's responses to the steps of the body scan process.

Make sure the client stands outside the fence of the space with the horse, with his/her back to the horse, and face to you.

Then say, "Close your eyes, scan through your body, and tell me what feelings or sensations you feel in your body. (With multiple sensations) Which one is most prominent?" (Write down)

After the answer is given, say, "Make the sensation as big as it can get, as if you were putting an amplifier on it. Breathe oxygen and awareness into it. Ask the sensation what information it wants to make clear to you. What is this about?"

Then you ask, "Now that you got the information, go back with your attention to the sensation. Has it changed?" If yes, then this body scan is finished.

If the sensation has remained the same or has intensified, ask the client to refocus on the sensation and ask it for another piece of information. Repeat until the sensation has changed or gone away.

Now ask the client to turn around to face the horse, and then scan through the body again, briefly, to see if there are any NEW sensations that PROMINENTLY ASK FOR attention. (Note this wording! So do not invite the client to do another full body scan, because as standard protocol this takes too much time). If no, continue with step 2. If yes: let the client ask the new sensation for information through the body scan steps until the sensation is reduced. (Write down the answers).

Step 2: Setting intention

The clients basically keep their eyes closed, but may keep them open if they strongly prefer it.

Then instruct the client, "We have an intention for the exercise with this horse and that is to **explore your hearts' desire [the purpose or direction of your heart].** Please direct your attention to your heart and check what purpose, wish or desire it would like to explore with this horse today."

Ask the client to open his/her eyes when an answer comes up and tell you what it is (write it down). [Note: In this exercise you can skip the step of having the client go back to their heart and ask it what needs to be activated.]

Then say, "Let's see if your horse has any suggestions for this." Explain possibly: "This is a metaphor for checking in with those you are interacting with, to see how they would prefer to handle this." [In leadership coaching, you can mention the analogy of asking for input from a team member with valuable expertise].

Now instruct the client to visualise their hearts' energy field making connection with that of the horse, while sending the heart's desire they want to explore, to the horse, and ask the horse if it already has a tip for that. Ask what the client gets back from his/her subconscious in response to that question. Write down the client's answer.

Step 3. Exercise with horse

Before opening the gate to the arena with the horse remind the client of the following points:

- Client may ask you for help or suggestions at any time when needed
- Remember safety rules
    - o stay on your feet
    - o do not put yourself between the horse and the fence
    - o do not block the horse in a corner
    - o the middle is the safest place
    - o "When I say STOP, immediately stop what you are doing and get at least 1 meter away from the horse."

Then you remind the client what their body's advice was, and the horse's advice, about the intention of the exercise.

Now let the client enter the arena to interact with the horse.

When these ask for help, or feel they are getting stuck, the following questions are appropriate to break the deadlock:

"What is happening?" / "What was your intention?" / "What was your body's advice?" / "What was the horse's advice?" (Remind the client of this if they have forgotten). "Have you already achieved the intention?" Sometimes they already have and are looking for something more, then, "What do you feel in your body?"

When the time is up, and you want to finish the exercise, you can go towards the gate yourself, ask if the exercise feels complete, and suggest that they thank the horse a little more.

Step 4: Completion:

This is a REFLECTIVE exercise. So give the clients the choice to spend a few minutes reflecting and taking notes about their experience themselves, or share it with you first.

<u>Don't tell the client what you think happened, even if the client asks you to.</u>

This is because you will be tempted to tell them what you think you know, especially when you are working with your own horses. Don't act on that. The temptation to do so is often ego-related. To be a truly powerful facilitator, you must learn to rise above your ego's desire to be "right".

The reason is that it is incredibly important for the client to evaluate his/her own process: the False Self is always looking for confirmation and information from outside. Our goal is to help the clients trust themselves, their own inner compass and authentic voice.

You can answer the questions about what your interpretation is with questions that lead the client back to his/her own process.

For example, when the client asks you questions like these, "What did you see happening?" "As a coach, how do you see my process in this exercise?" or "Does this horse normally push against other people?" you can respond with a counter question, "What is your own association with what happened?" "What happened to you when it pushed against you? What

did you think and feel?" "What is the relationship between the horse's behavior, and what you thought and felt?"

After the client has first answered the question in his or her own words, you can name an additional OBSERVATION and ASSOCIATION you had, e.g., "I saw the horse turn toward you when you had first clearly set a boundary. I personally associated that with the first step in making contact".

Always choose something complementary to what the client has already named. Keep this strictly with yourself (“I statements”), so ensure there is no inadvertent filling in of the clients experience, in the way you name your association. Don’t add anything if the client was very complete in the feedback (so omit this then).