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To: Lauri Bayless

Subject: Mirror Neurons & Equine Therapy? Business Sense from Horse Sense

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horse sense business sense

HINTS AND HURDLES TO STARTING YOUR OWN EQUINE ASSISTED PROGRAM

For EAP/EAL Professionals

February 2007

Greetings!

Welcome to another edition of the *Horse Sense, Business Sense* Newsletter for Equine Therapy and Learning Professionals. I've just returned from the Equine Guided Education Association's workshop north of San Francisco, and continue to be honored to be a part of this growing community. Thanks for being there with me!

I hope you enjoy this edition of the *Business Sense* newsletter, and please let me hear from you about what we can do to support you better on your way to a rewarding and inspiring career as an Equine Assisted Activities professional.

Happy Trails!

Shannon

in this issue

3 Keys to Finance & Funding



*Can't attend my presentation at the EAGALA Conference in March? Then join us for a telecourse as we discuss key elements of Finance and Funding your EAP/EAL Business. We'll discuss where to **find Start-Up Funding**, how to*

- 3 Keys to Finance & Funding
- Mirror Neurons and EAP/EAL?
- Excerpt from New Business Sense Book!
- February Making EAP/EAL Work Teleclass!

Mirror Neurons and EAP/EAL?



I've been thinking lately about what we mean when we say horses mirror us. While we have all seen this happen with clients in practice, I've always wondered **why** horses do this, or even if that's really what's happening. Is it just our projection that they are mirroring? Is there some innate reason why horses mirror their world, if in fact they do?

In the midst of my pondering this question, several articles have recently surfaced about the topic of "Mirror Neurons" in the brain and their function. *Scientific American*, *Psychotherapy Networker*, and most recently *Time* magazine have all featured articles about these mirror neurons, "nerve cells that fire when you intitate an action or when you perceive an action initiated by others, triggering a sympathetic response."

For example, if you were to look at an MRI of my brain as I groom my horse and compare it with a picture of my brain as I watch *you* groom *your* horse, they would look the same. It's as if I'm *mentally mirroring* the action I'm observing, even though I'm not actually doing it myself. If this is true, what is it that happens when the horses mirror our clients?

Equally compelling is a recent hypothesis that autism is caused by faulty "mirror neurons". Since "neural networks with mirror properties may ultimately be responsible for empathy, language and

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social behavior," there is much to support a link between autism and mirror neurons. While none of this is definitive, it is still provocative. To quote a UC San Diego professor on the topic, "Mirror neurons will do for psychology what DNA did for biology." Provocative, indeed!

I would love to hear from you about this! Email me your thoughts and opinions about mirroring, horses and our clients at [shannon @HorseSenseOtc.com](mailto:shannon@HorseSenseOtc.com).

Excerpt from New Business Sense Book!

How do you start a successful business? And how do you keep it successful?

Those are million dollar questions for sure, even more so when the business in question is a specialized form of work in a burgeoning industry. Just ask those who lived through the birth of the Internet or the dot com bubble. There was no model for what they did, no traditional business formats applied. So the industry had to survive a series of spectacular successes and failures.

The advent of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) in the past decade has borne a quiet revolution of its own. The growing credibility and value of therapeutic work done in the presence of horses has opened new possibilities for the therapeutic community and the people they serve.



But while the value of EAP and its various modalities creates new vistas in the therapy world, EAP/EAL programs face a corresponding challenge of how to operate and structure themselves in the business world.

This is the opening passage of my new book, available for the first time at the EAGALA Conference in March. I look forward to seeing you there and to signing copies of the book for you! Copies will be available for purchase on our website as of March 17th! [Pre-order your copy now!](#)

February Making EAP/EAL Work Teleclass!

Would you like to jumpstart your business by learning the hints and hurdles to beginning your own program, and avoid common pitfalls? Join us for this three week program February 27, March 6 and March 13 from 12-1pm EST for an introduction to the basics you need to have in place as you get your program off the ground and into your community!

1. **The good news:** Equine Therapy, Learning and Education is incredibly effective at creating positive change for individuals, families and groups, and it is a fast-growing field you can become a part of today!
2. **The bad news:** To date, there have been no clear road maps for how to begin your own Equine Therapy, Learning or Education program
3. **Help is available!** Making EAP Work 101 is a teleclass designed to get you up and running in this exciting area.

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