

# OPEN HEART OPEN MIND

A PATHWAY TO REDISCOVERING HORSEMANSHIP

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Heidi Potter encourages the use of approved safety helmets in all equestrian sports.

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## Dedication

To Evelyn Winter—Artist, friend, teacher and horsewoman—who encouraged, educated and pushed me to get going on this book. You were an inspiration, strong in life and strong as you journeyed towards the other side. Miss you Ev! (It's done ☺)



*Our "family," painted by Evelyn Winter for my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday*

## Foreword

Heidi Potter has been a standard name in quality horsemanship for the Southern Vermont region for many years. In my own work with horses, I have come across her students in many settings and have heard nothing but praise.

I'll never forget my first meeting with Heidi, when she asked me to come to her farm to provide a consultation. I found her to be charming, knowledgeable and eager to learn as much as she could about yet another system. Her hunger for learning, I believe, is what supports her excellent gifts as a teacher. It is rare to find someone in this profession with as much experience as she has, to still be so open and humble.

Since our first encounter, I have been lucky to enjoy Heidi's company in many settings, and her straightforward, honest approach to both horses and life has come as a breath of fresh air.

Her book is aptly titled, "Open Heart, Open Mind," because this is absolutely her approach to her work.

Whether she is sharing her personal experiences with her own path as a Martial Artist, or imparting her thoughtful approach to helping people with practical, heart-centered support aimed at improving the horse/human bond, her stories are enjoyable. Heidi's writing walks the path of both personal reflection and professional advice.

I believe whoever reads this book will thoroughly enjoy it.

Sharon Wilsie

*Author of Horse Speak*

*Founder of Wilsie Way Horsemanship*

## Open Heart, Open Mind

This book was written for the horse and the horse lover, with lessons learned from the horses and the humans that have touched my life.

Join me on my journey to better understand the horse. To learn how we can mindfully co-exist and communicate in a way that makes the most sense to him. This book includes lessons in horsemanship and stories of training—the successes and the failures. Read about how my training progressed from a place of dominance to a place of understanding. Learn how lessons from the martial arts enhanced my horsemanship, my teaching and my everyday life.



The stories are told from my point of view, and as best I can, from the horse's point of view. My intent and hope is that this book will give you a new way of looking at your horse, a way that comes from a place of knowledge, mindfulness, compassion and understanding. I believe the road to understanding the horse lies within us all. We simply need to open our heart and mind, silence our mouths and "listen" to what the horse is saying. As horsemen and women we should all share the common goal of learning how to co-exist in the type of world our horses need and desire, one of peace, security, comfort and joy. Follow me as I share some insights that will hopefully help you on your journey to a more safe and enjoyable life with your horses.

