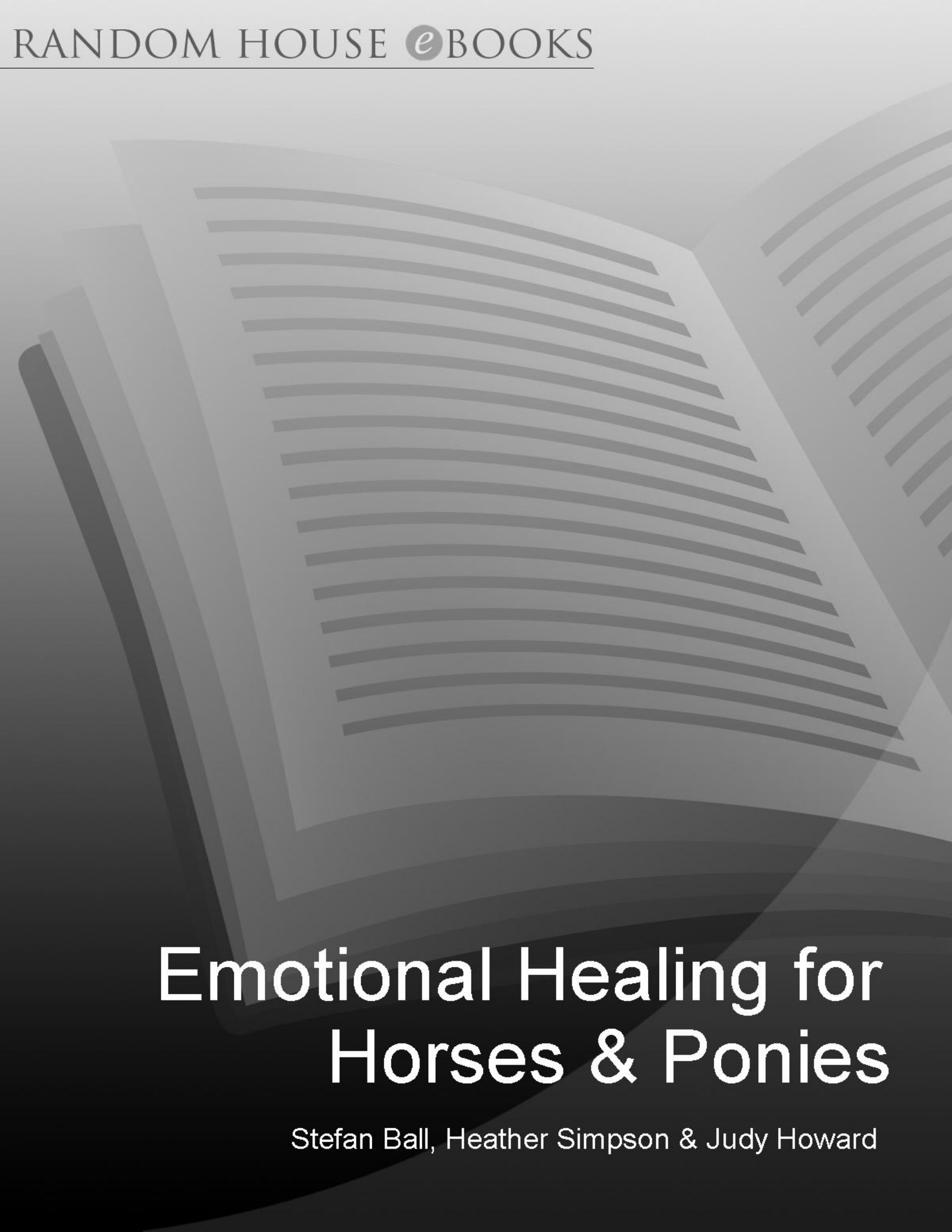


RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Emotional Healing for Horses & Ponies

Stefan Ball, Heather Simpson & Judy Howard



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Introduction

A true story

Once there was a horse called Borane. He lived in a remote part of Europe. He was a magnificent horse, similar in appearance to Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*.

At four years old Borane refused a water jump while taking part in one of his first competitions. To channel him towards the jump he was charged through a human tunnel that led to the edge of the water. The tunnel terrified him. As he got close to the water someone swung a rake and hit him on the rump. The prongs of the rake stuck in his tail. He clamped his tail down hard, and the handle of the rake got tangled between his legs and broke. The jagged broken end of the shaft dug into his inner thigh.

Borane was terrified. With his young female rider hanging on in fear of her life, he bolted through the water and on through the next jump, scattering and snapping wooden gates and poles. He ran for one and a half kilometres until he came to a T-junction on a busy road. Two cars swerved to miss him, and collided with each other instead. His rider flung herself to the ground, fracturing her skull and breaking her shoulder and both legs. She was unconscious for two days.

Borane's panic continued. The rake was still in his tail, the shaft still digging into his leg. He ran another kilometre or two and came to a roundabout at another busy junction.

Several cars swerved to miss him. This time he slipped and fell, and at last he was caught.

Soon afterwards Borane was sold. His new owner tended his wounds and put him in a paddock with a few other horses and some cattle for company. Borane lived there for two years without much human contact. Then his owner decided it was time for him to learn to jump again and started, very gently, to school him. But the fear and terror of his last jumping experience were still with him.

Four years passed. A young girl called Claire went on holiday with her family to the area where Borane lived. Claire's mother saw Borane and bought him for her. He was shipped off to their home.

Borane was a gentle horse and loved attention. Sometimes he would wrap his head and neck around Claire to stop her leaving the stable. But he wasn't happy. Sometimes he seemed depressed and panicky. He had no self-confidence. One day he would overreact to situations and the next day the same things would not bother him at all. Out riding he would lose concentration. Sometimes he reacted late or became anxious and anticipated things too quickly. There were times when he was argumentative as well. Although he was loving and affectionate, he never played. Claire was concerned and worried about him.



When Claire eventually asked Borane to try jumping again he became anxious and uncooperative. He twitched and reared up, pulled away, and sometimes refused to jump at all. Occasionally he hurried through the jumps to get the whole thing over and done with. At times Claire had difficulty keeping him under control and had to leave the ring before the course was completed.

Claire's mother sought advice, and ended up seeing a complementary practitioner who made up a mixture of remedies for him to take, in water, several times daily. Two days after beginning to take his potion Borane jumped in his first competition of the season. Claire was nervous. How would Borane behave? His behaviour when they were riding and practising had been wonderful and he was like a different horse, but how would he cope under pressure in a competition?

When the day came he was excited, but there was no trace of fear and anxiety. He followed Claire's instructions to the letter and jumped beautifully. They took every fence with ease and flew round the course as if on wings. People congratulated Claire and everyone was asking what could have made such a remarkable difference to Borane.



What this book can do for you

Part of the answer to their question lies in the work of a key figure in the history of 20th century medicine, Dr Edward Bach. The rest of the answer lies in the concept of *understanding*, which in this context means trying to see events from the horse's point of view. This book helps you bring these two elements together. Our aim is to help your horse attain the kind of emotional health that horses in the wild enjoy.

We start by looking at the application of Dr Bach's system of 38 flower remedies to the emotional health of horses and ponies. Part One tells you how to start thinking about your animal's individual personality and mood, how to mix remedies together, and of course when and how to give them. It lists the 38 remedies in full, tells you what each one is for, and gives examples of situations in which you could use them. If you are new to Dr Bach's work the idea of treating negative emotions with medicines might seem strange, and you might find it difficult to see how balancing emotions can affect physical problems like laminitis or strangles. These questions are addressed in Part One, and you can apply much of the information here to horses and riders alike.

Part Two is the longest section. It has two functions. The first is to provide quick access to the system when you need it. First look for the heading that most closely describes the situation that you and your horse are coping with. Then look at the suggested remedies. Once you have found one or two that seem to cover the problem re-read the full indications for those remedies as given in Part One. Cross-checking will help you select the right remedies for your horse's particular emotional state.

Part Two's second function is to deepen your knowledge of how horses think and feel. Our approach is not just ameliorative, but political. We argue that in order to have

truly balanced horses we have to understand much more about what they need from their environments: social contact with other horses, the chance to form a pair-bond, and freedom from life in a cage.

Part Three provides examples of other ways to approach your horse's emotional and physical health, and suggests ways in which you can learn more about Dr Bach's work.

Trade marks

In the UK, the words 'Bach' and 'Bach flower remedies' are used as generic terms to describe the 38 remedies discovered by Dr Edward Bach. Outside the UK, 'Bach' and 'Bach Flower Remedies' are trade marks or registered trade marks and can only be used in relation to particular products from particular essence makers. The authors hereby acknowledge these and any other trade marks mentioned in the text as the property of the relevant trade mark holders.

A note on personal pronouns

Throughout the book we have tended to refer to horses as 'he' and to riders as 'she', except where the sex of the horse or rider is an important consideration. This makes it easier to say clearly who is doing what to whom. It also allows us to avoid ungrammatical ('to tell a horse's age, look at their teeth'), depersonalising ('...look at its teeth') and clumsy ('...at his or her teeth') constructions. Our use of pronouns is not meant to discriminate against male riders or female horses.

In adopting this convention we follow the lead of Mary Wanless' thoughtful book *For the Good of the Horse*.



Part One

The remedies – history, description and use

Dr Bach and his discoveries

DR EDWARD BACH PRACTISED MEDICINE during the early part of the 20th century. He was a qualified surgeon who worked as a pathologist and bacteriologist, and also a well-known researcher who carried out extensive work into the relationship between chronic disease and the immune system. This culminated in the development of a group of vaccines based on different types of intestinal bacteria, which proved to be successful in combating certain chronic diseases. He was recognised around the world for this pioneering work, and enjoyed a substantial income (for the 1920s) of £5,000 a year.

Despite the success of his orthodox research Bach dreamed of finding a safer and gentler means of relieving people of their suffering. An introduction to homoeopathy gave him many of the answers he was looking for, and he began to prepare his vaccines homoeopathically. This provided a safe, minimal-dose alternative to the concentrated vaccination. It also meant that he no longer had to use injections on his patients. The homoeopathic preparations – known as nosodes – could be given by mouth, and for this reason were less intrusive and less painful.

Dr Bach was as interested in the fears and worries and hopes of his patients as he was in their physical ailments. He saw them as individuals with lives that extended beyond the bounds of the hospital ward. He would spend hours listening to what they said and taking note of their individual characters, and early on he noticed how a person's emotional outlook and attitude determined how well she would respond to treatment. The state of mind of his patients was crucial to their well-being and general

state of health. Happy people did not get ill as often as unhappy people. When they did fall ill they recovered sooner.

As Bach gave the homoeopathically prepared nosodes to more and more patients he began to see how some of their personality patterns were repeated from individual to individual. People with high amounts of a particular bacteria in their intestines seemed to share the same general outlook on life. This echoed the theory in homoeopathy of the *constitutional* remedy, in other words a medicine that matched a person's type of character. To test the theory he tried predicting which nosode people would need based on their character and personality. He checked out his predictions by analysing bacteria from his patients' stomachs. The correlation between the two methods of diagnosis was so high that he eventually dispensed with clinical physical examination altogether and selected purely on the basis of emotional outlook.

Despite the success his work had achieved there were two aspects of it that he wanted to improve. First, he was using the agent of a disease – bacteria – to treat the disease, and felt that a cleaner and more wholesome approach would be to find healing plants that would have similar effects. Second – and more importantly – his nosodes treated some chronic diseases but left the general problem of illness untouched. Convinced that negative emotional outlook was what gave disease the opportunity to flourish, he saw how true healing would only come when he could find a way to treat the patient's state of mind directly. The ideal medicine would have the capacity to heal at the most fundamental level, and so prevent physical disease before it took place.

The search for these new remedies took up the rest of Bach's life. One by one he discovered 38 remedies: 36 prepared from the flowers of wild trees, shrubs and plants, one from a cultivated plant, and one from natural healing

water. He finished his research in 1935, and announced that the system was complete. Just over a year later, in 1936, he died.

How flower remedies work

EACH OF BACH'S remedies treats a specific state of mind or way of thinking. Larch is the remedy for people who lack confidence, and its action is to remove the fear of failure. Gentian gives encouragement to those who have suffered a set-back. Clematis is for when we daydream and find it hard to concentrate on the present. Most of the time we feel a mix of emotions, so we can combine individual remedies together to create a personal blend. Hundreds of millions of combinations are possible. This flexibility means that 38 remedies can treat the varied emotional needs of every living thing, making Dr Bach's system unique in its combination of power and simplicity. But how exactly does the system do what it claims to do?

One way to explain how the remedies work is to think of emotional states as vibrations or sound waves. A pure note rings clear, and reflects a positive, healthy emotion such as love, kindness or joy. The sound of a cracked or muffled note is repressed and distorted, negative and unhealthy – the equivalent of hate, cruelty or despair. The 38 remedies vibrate at the same pitch as the basic positive emotions. A correctly selected remedy resonates with the repressed emotion and helps it ring out clearly and strongly once more. The note sings and the negative distortion disappears.

This description is not very 'scientific' but it is a helpful metaphor for energies that science is only beginning to explore. In Dr Bach's day the link between positive emotions and health was just as vague and unscientific, but solid research now supports the relationship, and molecular messengers between emotional states and the immune system have been identified and named.

Psychoneuroimmunology – the study of the way the central nervous and immune systems interact – has shown that happiness and positive emotions really do affect physical health, just as Dr Bach claimed. We can only guess what remarkable rediscoveries science will make in the future.

The 38 remedies

WHEN YOU BUY Bach flower remedies in a shop you will see that they are numbered from 1 to 38 according to their alphabetical order in English. We have listed them in this same order so that you can look them up more easily when you are using Part Two of this book.

Remember that Bach remedies rebalance emotions, which in turn helps the body to find its own natural state of health. The remedies do not have a direct effect on physical problems or symptoms. You should always consult a vet if you think your horse is in pain or needs medical attention.

One of the main uses for remedies when dealing with horses is to help them recover from the stress of living with people. If you want to start selecting remedies for your horse at once we strongly recommend that you read at least Parts One and Two of this book before doing so. This will help you avoid misunderstanding the emotional causes of your horse's behaviour and so selecting the wrong remedies. Incorrectly selected remedies will do no harm, but they will not help the situation improve.

1. Agrimony

General indication - used to help those who hide their troubles behind a cheerful face.

Horses of this nature may be difficult to identify because you often have to guess at the torture concealed inside an apparently cheerful animal. They will be inclined to be good-natured, happy, peace-loving creatures who try to defuse painful situations or potential confrontations,

perhaps by turning them into a game. Agrimony horses may be restless when you would expect them to rest, or seem vaguely agitated yet remain playful and in good humour. They are especially fond of company and activity because it helps them take their minds off their worries.

Things to look for:

- o horses who are particularly playful when under stress, or when there is emotional discord in the stable ([see here](#) for more examples of displacement behaviour);
- o obvious injury or illness accompanied by playful behaviour;
- o restlessness and sleeplessness – but remember that the average horse only dozes in snatches of four or five minutes at a time at any time of the day and night, and only sleeps about three hours in total, so don't assume sleeplessness without real cause.

Jake

Jake would scratch and paw at the ground when he was left alone. He was never quiet, and his rider repeatedly found herself reassuring him that there was nothing to be scared of. After a few remedies had been tried without success he was given Agrimony for the inner torture that he was trying to displace by pawing in the stable.

After just one day he was able to stay by himself without fretting, and he started to gain weight as his appetite improved.

Note: *Long-term solutions to this kind of problem involve real changes in management routines. [See here](#) for displacement behaviour; and [See here](#) for how to help horses confined to stables.*

2. Aspen

General indication – used to treat vague, nameless fears, and feelings of uneasiness and foreboding without there being anything specific to feel anxious about.

Horses in need of Aspen will seem afraid of something that is not really there. There is a free-floating anxiety, not attached to anything specific like a loud noise or strangers, but simply in the air. Remember however that the fact that *you* can't identify the reason for a horse's anxiety does not prove that the horse doesn't know what he is scared of. In practice it is usually a good idea to try the remedy for a known fear – Mimulus – before turning to Aspen.

Things to look for:

- o horses who seem nervous and anxious in familiar, safe environments;
- o horses who jump and run at every sound, even when the cause of the sound is known to be non-threatening;
- o sudden, unexplained panic, perhaps with rolling eyes and sweating.

3. Beech

General indication – given to encourage the latent sense of tolerance and understanding in those who are critical and intolerant of other ways of life. Those needing this remedy will believe that their own way of doing things is the only sensible and reasonable one, and that everyone who does things differently is simply stupid.

Horses in a Beech state may refuse to eat if you don't give them their usual food. They become irritable quite quickly, and will take the time to let you know of their disapproval.

Things to look for:

- o horses who behave irritably when their normal living arrangements are disrupted;
- o horses who show intolerance of new people, foods, animals, etc.;
- o horses who overreact to minor irritations such as brushing through long grass;
- o horses who protest vocally or kick or move about when you try to groom or saddle them.

Note: *Problems with saddling or taking the bit are often caused by pain. Always check with the vet before assuming they are due to a Beech state.*

4. Centaury

General indication - used to encourage the will-power of those who are easily dominated. Those needing Centaury will do anything for anyone, and are always obliging and ready to serve, but can find it hard to say 'no' and at the extreme fail to live their own lives at all.

Horses of this type are soft and compliant. They don't tend to fight back if they are subject to aggression or attack. They may be quiet and introverted and go out of their way to help another creature. Other animals and riders will find it easy to dominate them.

Things to look for:

- o horses who are bullied by other horses and can't seem to respond or escape;
- o horses in a herd who seem not to be getting their fair share of food or shelter;

- o 'soppy' horses who will do anything for you but seem lost when you are not there;
- o horses who have trouble setting sensible boundaries to their personal space;
- o horses who never take the initiative and always wait to be led.

5. Cerato

General indications – used to strengthen the self-belief of those who do not trust their own instincts. Cerato creatures tend to question their decisions as soon as they have made them. They seek the reassurance of others, hoping for confirmation that they are doing the right thing, and may accept bad advice and so end up doing the wrong thing.

The typical Cerato indications of hesitancy and mimicry can both be normal behaviour in horses. Copying others, for example, is a perfectly natural part of play. But genuine Cerato horses will look for approval before doing anything at all. Even after the event they may look for confirmation that they have acted correctly or appropriately.

Things to look for:

- o horses who seem to need more reassurance than others;
- o horses who copy other horses more readily than most, and so behave out of character.

6. Cherry Plum

General indications – given to help bring calm and restore sanity to those who feel on the point of losing control, and perhaps committing some violence that they would never consider while in their right minds.

Cherry Plum is a fear remedy. Just as children are frightened by their own temper tantrums, so horses can be made hysterical and terrified when their frustration gets the better of them. Cherry Plum is the remedy to maintain and restore self-possession and remove this kind of fear.



Things to look for:

- o horses who injure themselves, for example biting their flanks or throwing themselves around the stable, especially when the behaviour seems compulsive or manic;
- o horses who panic and do anything to escape, regardless of the risk of injuring themselves;
- o horses who strike out with their forelegs or bite, and then immediately seem frightened at what they have done;
- o uncontrolled attacks on smaller animals or other horses.

7. Chestnut Bud

General indications – used to help those who repeat the same mistakes and do not seem to learn from their errors or from watching the example of others.

This remedy can be given to horses who take a long time to learn how life with humans and other horses can be made to work. But it isn't a panacea for any horse who does not do exactly what you want. There may be very good reasons why your horse is not learning from you, and if you are the one making mistakes you might think about taking Chestnut Bud yourself.

Things to look for:

- o horses who can't learn simple rules and moves despite repeated (and gentle) encouragement;
- o horses who repeat behaviour despite the bad effects that follow, such as the colt who continues to make overtures to an adult mare despite the fact that he always receives a kick for his trouble.

8. Chicory

General indications - used to bring out the positive, generous side of loving individuals who need to be loved in return, and who get upset if they don't get the attention they feel they deserve. Chicory types at their most negative are possessive and emotionally manipulative.

Horses of this type are happiest when they are able to show and receive affection. They may be unwilling to share you and so seem possessive when other people or animals are around. They may pine for you when you are not there.

You may also see Chicory states develop between horses. But be aware of our natural tendency to imagine that horses are just like human beings. Behaviour that looks like Chicory to us may be neutral in a herd animal, and simply reflect his need to be part of the herd, or the strong drive he has to pair up with another horse for increased safety and mutual support ([see here](#)).

Things to look for:

- o horses who seek attention from 'their' human but show little liking for strangers;
- o horses who guard and shepherd another horse to an excessive degree;
- o horses who compete for your attention, either with your other horses, or when you talk to other riders, etc.

Chicory is sometimes thought of as the 'controlling mother' or 'mother-in-law' remedy, despite the fact that a Chicory human is just as likely to be male. In equine society the stereotype is reversed, and stallions chivvyng their herds along and rounding up stray members of their harem are more obvious Chicory examples than the average mare.

9. Clematis

General indications – used to help ground those who live in dreams of future happiness. The remedy helps them act in the present and make happiness come true now.

Clematis horses seem to fall into a drowse more easily and more often than other horses. They have little liking for or link with everyday reality, and instead live in a world of their own, not paying attention to what is going on around them any more than they absolutely have to. (NB: typical Clematis type indications could be symptoms of ill health. Always ask the vet to check your horse if he seems sleepy or inattentive.)

Things to look for:

- o excessive sleepiness;

- o horses who get into accidents through not paying attention to where they are;
- o horses who do not notice positive stimuli such as the approach of a pair-bond or the arrival of food.

10. Crab Apple

General indications – given to help those who feel ashamed or disgusted at their own appearance, or who feel contaminated, whether by disease, poison or unclean living. Crab Apple types tend to fuss over minor details, particularly those related to cleanliness, and have a tendency towards trivial obsessions and compulsive behaviour.

Horses in this state may appear particularly distressed when suffering from skin complaints or parasite infestation. They may exhibit compulsive behaviour, and be especially fussy about their living arrangements.

Things to look for:

- o horses who are overly fastidious, for example refusing to graze in areas that other horses are happy to accept;
- o horses who exhibit stereotypical behaviour, such as weaving and wind-sucking ([see here](#));
- o horses who seem depressed due to parasitic infestation, bowel problems, etc.;
- o depression linked with any problem that affects the way the horse looks.

11. Elm