



The History of TTEAM and TTouch:

the development of TTEAM from the Feldenkrais Method to The Intuitive Discovery of Tellington TTouch™ for Animals and their People.

by Linda Tellington-Jones

The year 2005 will mark the 30 Year Anniversary of TTEAM: Tellington Touch Equine Awareness Method, a training method for horses that has spread around the world in the ensuing three decades. I began to develop the method in 1975 during a 4- summer study at the Humanistic Psychology Institute in San Francisco, taught by the renowned Israeli physicist, Moshe Feldenkrais. The Feldenkrais Method is a form of bodywork for humans using gentle, non-habitual movements with the intent of activating unused neural pathways to the brain. It is highly successful for helping people recover function after injury, for improving athletic ability, for increasing physical and mental function and for increasing one's capacity and potential for learning.

I enrolled in the program planning to use the Feldenkrais work to improve the athletic ability of my riding students. However, in the first week of the program I realized the potential for horses.

I had been a successful teacher and trainer in the horse world for more than 20 years at that time. In the 1960's I founded and directed an internationally recognized nine-month residential school for riding instructors and trainers, and had co-authored a syndicated column in major equine magazines as well as the first book on equine massage and physical therapy in 1965.

However, studying the Feldenkrais Method for humans, I began to consider the equine nervous system in terms of behavior and health and after 33 years of being almost daily with horses, began to see with fresh eyes.

Introducing a new idea to the world of horses was not an unusual experience, as my first husband and I had founded the Pacific Coast Equestrian School and Research Center for clinical studies of horses in the early 1960's. By 1975 I introduced the then revolutionary concept that horses who are resistant and unmanageable

are usually reacting to pain, fear or stress. Integrating the theory of working with the nervous system of horses, I began to develop new ways of teaching a horse to learn without force. By 1978 I had developed the system of educating and healing horses known as Tellington Equine Awareness Method or TEAM.

From 1977 to 1983 I was also honing my skills with the Feldenkrais method to work with many people (as well as horses) in the U.S. and Germany, teaching them gentle movements of Feldenkrais "Awareness Through Movement" and "Functional Integration" to relieve pain, improve their athletic and performance abilities, and enhance their quality of life.

TTouch is Birthed

Tellington TTouch was "officially" birthed on a warm July day in 1983 in Delaware where I had been teaching a weekend clinic sponsored by veterinarians at the Delaware Equine Clinic. On an evening following the clinic I was asked to work on a very sore mare who belonged to one of the veterinarians from the clinic. This mare objected fiercely to being groomed or saddled by pinning her ears, flashing her teeth and often threatening to kick when touched. I had been asked to look at this mare to see if there was a way to help her with the Feldenkrais Method, and when I placed my hands gently on her shoulder and began the slow, almost imperceptible movements of "Functional Integration"™ the mare became very quiet and accepting of my hands on her body. The owner of the mare was amazed at how her normally cantankerous horse seemed to enjoy the movements that were so gentle as to be barely visible. Within minutes the mare began to lower her head. Her eyes softened, her head lowered and after a few minutes she took a deep breath and relaxed. Her owner, Wendy, asked me in a surprised voice, "What are you doing to effect



my mare in this way? Are you using energy or what is your secret?."

Without thinking I responded with the prophetic words, "Don't worry about what I'm doing. Just place your hand lightly on the shoulder and push the skin in a circle."

Pushing the skin in a circle was not related to the Feldenkrais Method, but I learned many years ago to trust my intuition, so I watched quietly as Wendy followed my minimal instructions. To my surprise, the mare became as quiet and accepting of the light circles as she had been for the Feldenkrais movements.

That moment was an epiphany for me - one of these rare "aha" moments that shifts ones path, as though into another dimension.

One of the drawbacks to the Feldenkrais Method for horse people was the years it takes to become proficient. I had been teaching simple "non-habitual movements that are the mark of Feldenkrais Method with great success, but in that prophetic moment when I saw the effects on this mare with such simple instructions I had the realization that there was something special in the circular movements that anyone could learn easily.

From that day on I began experimenting with a variety of circular movements. What has emerged over the two ensuing decades is Tellington TTouch - an easily learned method of 20 plus hand positions combined with varying tempos and pressures that anyone can learn. The TTouches cross the species barrier and have spread around the globe for use in the world of humans as well as all animals.

Trust Your Intuition

TTouch was birthed because of my trust in intuition. Trusting our intuition is one of the keys to being an effective practitioner of TTouch. We talk about intuition in our classes but what is it really? My dictionary defines intuition as "The act or faculty of knowing without the use of rational process: immediate cognition; a sense of something not evident or deductible; a capacity for guessing accurately."

However, I recently discovered a definition by Judee Gee, author of the book "Intuition" that describes, for me, the importance of acknowledging and developing the intuitive thought process. She writes, "*Intuition is the manifestation of divine consciousness within you. The messages it sends are essential to your emotional, physical and spiritual health. Receiving and understanding these truths will change your life and help you find your true path.*"

My awareness of intuition was awakened when I was 22 years old from an Astrological Reading I ordered. It included information that I would develop a new type of communication that would spread around the world! At the time I thought it must have something to do with videos because they seemed to be a type of future communication. Little did I know it was to be the communication of TTouch! The advise in the Astrological Reading was to develop my intuition because it would be a major factor in my life's work. I've since discovered I am not alone. For example, Dr. Jonas Salk, polio vaccine inventor, said, "It is always with excitement that I wake up in the morning wondering what my intuition will toss up to me, like gifts from the sea. I work with it and rely on it. It is my partner."

I've read many books on the subject of intuition over the years and become aware of the concept of left and right hemispheres of the brain concerning logical and intuitive thinking. Today the concept of developing both intuition and logic is often referred to as Whole Brain Learning.

Whole Brain Learning

I believe an activation of intuitive and logical thinking processes occurs every time we TTouch a person or animal. Why? Because intuition has to do with visualization and movement, and left-brain logic has to do with numbers and logical thought process.

Every time we "imagine" the face of a clock as we push the skin from 6 o'clock once around and stop at 9 o'clock, *imagining* the face of the clock activates the intuitive part of the brain, as does the *movement* involved in pushing the skin in the



circle. The *logical* process is activated by thinking of the *numbers* 6, 9, 12 and 3 as we pass those portions of our imaginary clock. As we *imagine* our hand position in a “Tiger TTouch” or “Bear Paw” the intuitive thinking is activated. With the act of *holding the hand in a specific position* and pushing the skin in *one and a quarter circles* we have the *numbers and the logical sequence* that activates the logical process.

I believe this theory of activation of both modalities – logical and intuitive - explains why so many adults report a life-changing effect from using TTEAM and TTouch, and why many children enrolled in TTouch classes in their school programs have demonstrated improved levels of concentration, emotional balance and enhanced learning skills in a few TTouch sessions.

I also believe this Whole Brain concept is one of the most important contributions of TTEAM and TTouch.

I have frequently been apologetic and often felt inferior over the years because TTouch was an intuitive discovery. Twenty years ago, many left brained folks discounted my intention of activating cellular function and the body’s ability to heal itself by communicating with cells. On my initial search in 1969 for a definition of intuition I was encouraged by the description of “unlearned knowledge” in “Essays of a Modern Mystic” by Lewis and I’ve often felt encouraged by the knowledge that Albert Einstein received his revolutionary information in his dreams. I’ve finally come to accept the “unscientific” source of TTouch thanks to my friend, Dr. Cecilia Wendler, associate professor of research ethics at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. She has assured me that intuitive knowledge is a recognized source of new information in modern science. I was immensely relieved when I heard this and now accept the uniqueness of the work thanks to the very fact that it came intuitively.

How does TTouch work and why is the method useful for humans too?

The purpose of the Tellington TTouch is to enhance the body, mind and spirit of animals and

their people. It consists of circular TTouches and lifts, done all over the body with the intent of awakening the function of the cells and the bodies ability to heal itself.

We don’t understand why it works so effectively to reduce pain and fear, but the results have been so positive in hospitals and for individuals working on themselves, that TTouch is now included in the curriculum at the University of Minnesota for a minor degree in Complimentary Healing Modalities, through their Center for Spirituality and Healing and is being considered for research at a pain center in Milwaukee.

Countless people over the past 20 years have reported a heightened sense of wellbeing, significant reduction of stress, and relief from pain and depression.

Another consistent result seems to be heightened ability to focus and concentrate, both in children and adults. My theory that the reason for these changes are a result of activation of both hemispheres of the brain, was supported by two studies of the effects of TTouch conducted at the Biofeedback Institute of Boulder, Colorado by Anna Wise in the 1984 and 1985. These studies were done with a “Mind Mirror” that measures all four brain waves – beta, alpha, theta and delta- in both left and right hemispheres. (For more detail read “The High Performance Mind” by Anna Wise or check out her website www.annawise.com.)

The results showed that both the person receiving TTouch as well as the person applying TTouch, had this “whole brain” activation- often in a specific pattern coined “the Awakened Mind State” by British researcher, Maxwell Cade.

I became aware of the value of Tellington TTouch for people in the first year of its development in 1983. So that horse owners would understand why their horses seemed to love the work so much, I began to teach TTouch to the riders. Reports of reduced pain, increased mobility and a deep sense of well-being often happened in the 30 minute sessions when I had clinic participants standing up and TTouch their neighbors. That was further inspiration for teaching the work to people.



As a result I have been teaching a few weeklong workshops each year since then in Europe and North America. Most of the 1400 plus certified TTouch Companion Animal and Horse Practitioners around the world learn it for themselves and their families. Many massage therapists, physical therapists and nurses have integrated the work for their clients and patients. It is largely through the accumulated anecdotal evidence and feedback that we began to realize the value of the work for people.

In the past few years TTouch and TTEAM has become an integral part of two mental health programs for at-risk youth: MN LINK (Minnesota Linking Individuals, Nature and Critters serving the greater Minneapolis, Minnesota area, and Charis Youth Center in Grass Valley, California. A German youth program initiated four years ago by TTouch Instructor, Bibi Degn has recently been incorporated under the umbrella of our Animal Ambassador non-profit organization. Their vision is to integrate youth with animals and nature, to use TTEAM and TTouch to teach character building, appreciation and joy of life, responsibility, and love of animals and nature. For information in German see www.animalambassadors.de.)

My vision is to make a positive contribution to the world by encouraging and supporting more programs that incorporate TTouch for “normal” youth whether it be through our volunteer work in schools, summer camps and petting zoos (Oakland Petting Zoo’s “Goat Ranger” program), as well as for kids-at-risk.

The work continues to unfold. Very encouraging results are being reported by a group of Fibromyalgia sufferers in Germany who have shown significant pain relief and improvement of wellbeing after TTouching themselves and being TTouching by family members.

I’m looking forward to the publication of my human book for the layperson, as well as “The Tellington TTouch for Health-Care Professionals: A Practical Guide” written and edited by M. Cecila Wendler, RN CCRN PhD and myself. We’re hoping for spring publication 2005.

In the meantime I continue to be inspired and thrilled by the reports from our practitioners who are having such wonderful results making a difference in the fields of behavior, health and wellbeing, performance and relationship for both animals and their people. Please do stay in touch and share with us your successes and/or questions.