

[The Thousand Pound Coach](#)

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I've always been intrigued with the idea of getting a horse to like me. Or trust me. Or teach me. Or not bite me.

We were horse camping a couple of weeks ago and I tried out some of my theories on this big, smart, opinionated mare.

I noticed in my three days with her that we did best when I told her where I wanted to go, but then trusted her wisdom about our pace and possible next steps. I practiced being calm and playful and clear. And I trusted her to be calm and confident and clear in her own way as we moved forward.

There was still a lot of snow in the North Cascades, and some cold creeks to cross, but she clearly knew the best places to put her big feet, and when she stumbled, I know I looked more shocked than she did.

Through the years, I've come to believe that a good coach is someone who helps you pay attention to what you need to find out about—or get better at—so that you can travel where (and how) you want. Somewhere along the trail, it occurred to me that the big girl was quietly conducting a demonstration. Plus I'm pretty sure she liked me.