

YODER SAYS...



I never planned to be a therapy pony. I opened my eyes in Ohio, grew up, and worked on a few farms there. When I lost my special friend who pulled the wagon alongside me, I was sent to a sale barn. People from Hold Your Horses found me there and looked me over real good. They climbed on my back (forwards and backwards), lead me through some obstacles, and even blew bubbles in the air near my head. They didn't act like any other humans I'd known, but I liked the sound of their voices and the way they handled me. Next thing I knew, I was in a big van headed for Minnesota to become a therapy pony.

Why did they choose me? They liked my size and movement. They looked really closely at my eyes every time they showed me something new, and they liked my calm responses. I guess I passed those first few tests at the sale barn, but the real work started when I arrived in Minnesota. I learned about indoor arenas, mounting ramps, and wheelchairs. I worked on circles and stops and starts. I grew accustomed to new sounds, new people, and a new herd of friends. My body started to feel really good. I ate awesome food and enjoyed long turn out in the pasture and, oh, carrots! Whoa, carrots are some good vegetables.

I really started my best work when I met our clients. Some clients would lead me around and some needed time on my back. I could feel their bodies changing and shifting while I walked and how their breathing would slow down or speed up. Sometimes a person would lay gently over my back and I could feel a tear roll down their cheek and onto my soft side. I waited for them, I listened to my handler, and I could see the therapist helping with touch and words and gestures. I trusted my team.

Others in our herd do this work too. Sometimes they understand their job, like I do, but sometimes they don't and the job is just not a good fit. Those are sad times. The people work hard to help us do our jobs here, but when our movement is not steady enough, or we don't work in enough sessions, or if we get too distracted by scary things, then we have to move along. Saying goodbye is really hard, but the people have to make that decision sometimes. It can be uncomfortable, but I really believe that people, like horses, were made to do hard things.

I am here for the duration. The therapy pony job works for me and I work to make lives better. It makes my own life better, too. Thanks for reading. Come visit me sometime.

~ Best, Yoder



YODER

THE THERAPY PONY, FEATURED COLUMNIST

You can email me through
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(Please write Yoder Says in the subject line)

