

YODER SAYS...

For a long while at the farm I worked only with the littles, but soon my steady, dependable nature won over older clients as well. In fact, I don't mind saying that I am kind of a barn favorite. Clinicians and clients choose me for their sessions when fear or restless energy are significant. I like experiencing how people change their breathing and heart rate as they curry my backside or brush out my tail. The therapists say I help clients co-regulate. I call it *Yoderizing*.

Yoderizing is not passive. It requires participation through movement or mindful observation. I often Yoderize new volunteers and staff when they are training for barn chores. They want to learn about entering and exiting stalls, safe leading through pasture gates, and how to put on a halter or clean feet. I am calm and patient with them and they say it helps them feel confident and ready to work with other horses. I say they put in the effort and have been Yoderized.

Sometimes I need to Yoderize my herd mates. Recently we had a young horse on trial at the farm. He was really great-looking dude with the size and movement the team needs right now. I spent some time with him when he first arrived. Yoderizing helped him settled into the herd and the new digs, but he never really warmed to the donkeys or the dark corners of our indoor arena. Ultimately his trial period at the farm came to a close before we could help him learn to manage his reactivity and be chill. It is, after all, a learned skill. I am aware that I radiate more calm than many others but even I need to manage my big feelings sometimes...like the times when the turkeys jump from the trees.

I know that people have a lot of big feelings, too. Before people do the growing they need to do, they don't always have the capacity to manage their big feelings. The unabashed delight of a child is a joy to experience. When other unabashed feelings emerge, I understand how important it is to be patient. As horse and human professionals, we practice showing up as a steady presence for our clients. This is an everyday practice and some days it is hard enough to show up and manage ourselves. I just want to send out some Yoderizing to all of you and say that it is okay. Please remember to treat yourself as kindly as you treat others. That is how we feed our own inner calm so we can show up in the best way possible. I am heading off for a roll in the green grass. Sending peace and sunshine out to all of you for the summer.

~ With Love, Yoder



YODER

THE THERAPY PONY, FEATURED COLUMNIST

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

