Equine Triads: Horse, Owner and Partner – Who Loves Ya Baby?

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In the beginning

- ‘Do Horses Lead to Divorces?’ asked Horse & Hound (July 2007)
  - ‘YES’ said my husband........!!!
- In discussion with Dashper and Wallace
  - Probably – Wallace
  - No – Dashper
- The project was born
The Research

- Questionnaires, Interviews, Discussions
- Multi-introspective
  - Us
  - Our partners
Kate and Ian

- Kate had Charlie before meeting Ian, who is totally non-horsey
- Charlie is in full livery
- Kate earns more than Ian, difference is ‘Charlie money’
- Ian sees Charlie as ‘Kate time’ but would like a little more involvement
- Kate and Ian have no children and no plans for any
- Kate is always rushing and would like more time with Charlie but doesn’t want to upset Ian
  - Standing joke about time
Carrianne and Jason

- Carrianne has 3 horses and 1 livery at home
- Carrianne and Jason have 1 young daughter and a child on the way
  - Jason very worried about safety of daughter
- Jason doesn’t like the time taken
  - Riding
  - Looking after the horses
- Resentful of moving to the country
- But actually supportive emotionally
Julie and Stephen

• Herd of horses at home – number fluctuates between 9 and 4
  – One is Stephen’s – started riding when he met me
• One teenage son – non-horsey
• Stephen hates time spent ‘doing horses’
• Stephen worries about money
• Loves the horses but 2 maximum
• Differences of opinion over
  – Riding and tacking up
  – Cost and Time
Initial Findings - Similarities

- All partners are more sympathetic and empathetic than we expected and understood.
- All earn less than we do
- All have an issue with the time taken to some degree
- Communication is key
  - Lacking - arguments
Initial Findings - Differences

- Horses at home v *full* livery
- Amount the partners are/feel *expected* to be involved
- Family time separate
- Number of horses
Discussion

- How honest were they?
- All said horses come before them
- Safety of us (and family) came up
- All want more of our time with them
- None like the commitment – OK for Ian as little there

- We shied away from it but is there an element of jealousy? (some comments led to this)
Food for thought

• Made us more sympathetic to them
  – Carrianne now selling a horse
  – Julie more able to have old ones pts and not asking Stephen to ride more
  – Kate riding out more with Ian on his bike
• Made them think more deeply about the horses and their role in family life
  – They accept we are who we are because of the horses (and that we will still have them in the future)
So, will horses lead to divorces?

- If not managed properly – YES
- Family should come first
- As with other aspects give and take are important
- Communicate – talk not argue
- One horse in full livery seems the optimum
  - And no kids!

Note that this is early days and needs more analysis. The final work will be published next year.
Your thoughts please

- Does this resonate with your partnerships?
Thank you for listening
Any Questions?