

Lessons From a Lead Mare Book Summary

Lessons From a Lead Mare is the second book in Charlie Botting's Lead Mare series. While *Lead Like a Lead Mare* introduces the theory and philosophy that make a Lead Mare, *Lessons From a Lead Mare* shows the reader how to apply this. Each chapter shares one or more stories from the author's own experience that illustrate one of the Lead Mare qualities.

Each chapter starts by introducing the Lead Mare quality and explaining what this means. Then, Charlie's own stories of how she applies these qualities through her daily life of living on a guest ranch and in a wilderness lifestyle bring these qualities to life. At the end of each chapter, there are questions and suggestions for the reader which are designed to help them apply the Lead Mare qualities in their own lives, whatever their situation may be, whatever stage of their Lead Mare journey they are on.

In the rest of this book summary, we'll share some of the stories and the Lead Mare quality they illustrate.

Conscious and aware is introduced as the foundation quality of a Lead Mare. If she isn't conscious and aware in all that she does, it is very hard to apply any of the other qualities. Charlie shares her own experiences of being conscious and aware with several stories about looking for horses. With horses that are free to go out on the range in a 6,000km² territory, there are lots of places they could hide out. Being conscious and aware means Charlie knows the places the horses like to go and can find the clues that the horses are there such as fresh tracks and poop, the sound of bells or the actions of the horse she is riding. Being conscious and aware expands from just having a heightened awareness of your physical environment. It also encompasses how well you know yourself and your relations with other people. Knowing other people very well allows you to work more collaboratively as a team and be more productive. Knowing yourself well helps you make better decisions and plans that are more likely to lead to the desired outcome.

Conservation is based on the concept of reciprocity. If you are benefiting from the natural environment, it is your responsibility to take care of it so it is unharmed by your actions and continues to thrive. Charlie shares the story of carrying out a population count of California Bighorn sheep to learn more about their herd dynamics and winter survival strategy to impact population management. Snow shoeing into the mountains and staying in an old range cabin with no running water or electricity were just part of the project. Charlie and her team found multiple groups of sheep throughout the study and documented them carefully to record the age and sex of all the sheep which eliminated the risk of double counting. The study brought new findings about the sheep's behaviour and brought Charlie face-to-face with a group of three sheep.

Calm, stable and reliable is a very important trait for a Lead Mare as it allows her to get the job done without bringing drama or unnecessary emotion to the situation. Charlie tells the story of training Apache, a young wild horse, to become a calm, stable and reliable riding horse. She shares the training program, first Apache was a pack horse so he could learn what was expected of him without risking a rider's safety. Charlie then introduced Apache to wearing a saddle and bridle. She rode him in the corral, before building up to riding him around the ranch and then on pack trips where Apache soon became the lead horse, a position few new horses are ready for. By being calm, stable and reliable, Charlie supported Apache with a calm energy in what was a new and uncertain situation for him. Apache also turned out to have a calm, stable and reliable nature which meant he could handle whatever came his way. This is what allowed him to progress to being the lead horse on rides much sooner than other new horses might.

Commitment is to do what you say you are going to do, when you say you will do it. In the case of hay making, this is dictated by the law of nature. At a certain time of year, the hay is ready to harvest, then finding a window between rains and before the hay goes to seed means there isn't any time to waste. Charlie explains two different methods that she used for collecting the baled hay off the field and stacking it in a hay stack. Round bales were collected using a tractor and truck pulling a trailer. Square bales were picked up by hand and loaded onto a stone boat (a trailer without wheels) pulled behind a truck. Picking bales by hand is very hard physical work, usually in very hot weather. It takes a lot of commitment to keep going all day and get the job done before the hay gets rained on.

Acceptance allows you to objectively assess what is happening and determine if an action needs to be taken to change it. Charlie shares the story of trying to catch a herd of wild horses and how each time something went wrong, the team were able to reassess the situation and make a new plan. The lead mare of the wild horses was very clever and knew how to evade the riders, but by accepting the situation, the team were able to make the day a success.

Being capable, independent and self-reliant gives you the skills and confidence to get the job done without waiting for someone else to tell you what to do or how to do it. When a wildfire threatened to burn up the ranch, Charlie and the ranch crew knew their only option was to stand their ground and protect the property and animals. With many horses, chickens, dogs and cats on the property, leaving wasn't an option. Through building fireguards, setting up sprinklers and watering down the buildings, the team saved the ranch and animals from the fire. But now there were more challenges as the power lines had burned up. To continue running the ranch, the team had to set up their generators and keep them running. This meant the food that filled many freezers wasn't wasted, business could continue as normal with the internet and computers running and the electricity in the ranch house worked as normal. Venturing outside the green grass and trees of the ranch property, Charlie saw what would have happened if they hadn't protected the ranch. All around the ranch, trees had been turned to black sticks, there was nothing but ash on the ground and several neighbours' houses had burned up. This experience taught Charlie a lot about the importance of being able to take care of things yourself, which she shares in this story.

Each quality works in synergy with every other quality to create the holistic concept of a Lead Mare. A Lead Mare is an empowered woman who can handle any challenge that comes her way. *Lessons From a Lead Mare* gives the reader an empowering philosophy to live their life by, captivating stories of life in the wilderness and tales that bring to life the theory of *Lead Like a Lead Mare*.

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