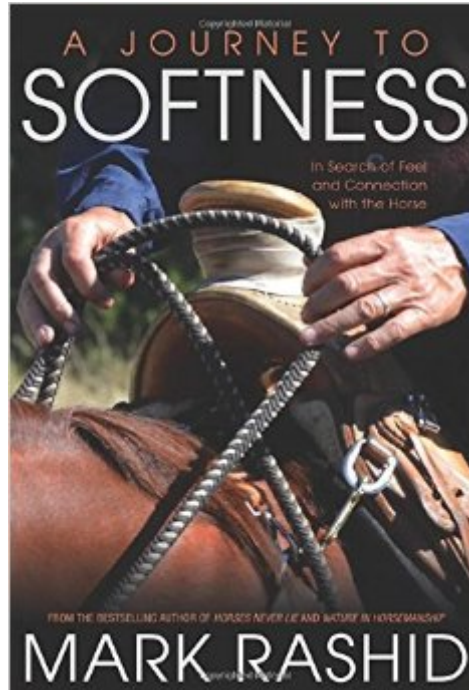


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# A Journey To Softness: In Search Of Feel And Connection With The Horse



## Synopsis

Internationally acclaimed horse trainer Mark Rashid shares and analyzes the remarkable events, quiet moments, and humbling stumbling blocks that he can identify as significant in his personal journey to finding softness with both horses and people. Softness, via what many in the horse world today might refer to as feel, begins, Rashid says, with one simple truth: It's not about what we do that starts us on the path to softness, but rather, it's what we don't do. Softness is having the sensitivity we need in order to feel when and if the horse tries to give. It is about developing the kind of awareness and feel it takes to know when we are working against our horses, rather than with them. In these forthright stories, readers get a glimpse of a life that has produced a man known for his ability to solve difficult problems with communication rather than force, as well as methods and techniques gleaned from decades of work with horses, horse people, and the way of harmony through the martial arts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a beautiful book. I have had the great good fortune of studying with Mark, and so I can say with certainty that this is a person who truly walks (and rides) the talk. Mark's writing is so engaging, so plain-spoken and yet eloquent, that I find myself reading just several pages at a time, savoring the writing like rich chocolate. As a Somatic Movement Therapist, a body person, dancer, movement analyst, I am always in search of writing that percolates into the body, that changes me as I read. This is his gift to not just the rider, but all of us. His view of softness is not limited to the

riders hands, or seat of legs, but extends to every aspect of life. He helps us to bring greater awareness and a "feel" to each moment. Doing that wakes us up to a bodily relationship to the present. Ellen Langer, author of Mindfulness, talks about it as learning to notice new things. Softly holding my cup of tea this morning, I began to see how the light moved through the glass candlesticks and vase on the table as if it were underwater. I heard the sound of the dogs moving above us like little rattles. I felt the warmth of the cup moving up my arms. New things. What I also have noticed, with my soft, mindful attention, is the tendency to orient toward pain, toward anxiety. It is actually easier to harden around those old, repeating thoughts than to sit in the soft newness of the now. Why is that? Because being hard (hard body, hard mind, hard heart) is easier than vulnerability and openness. In Mark's book, the reader will find help for all of that. Look and see!

Mark Rashid just always keeps getting better, digs deeper! His parallel journey with Aikido really drove home to him -- & me (12 yrs & Black belt in karate) -- how many levels we can (& need) to work thru with these unbelievable creatures! Problem is, I think you would miss well over 1/2 the journey if this were the 1st book of his you read.

I love the idea of "softness" as a way to relate to animals and people. The writer does an excellent job of describing what it feels like to work with a horse to achieve desired goals instead of working against the animal. The feel of "softness" communicates both ways and creates cooperation and trust.

I enjoyed the stories in this book and examples given - it is indeed a journey described and one I was very grateful to read. It is not a "how to" book but more about lessons that have helped learn the concept of softness. I found I could consider a number of the lessons and how they might apply in my life or what did that lesson say to me. I know I will read it a few times and see new things to consider each time. Very worthwhile reading for anyone who wants to consider themselves and their interactions with horses.

I usually love Mark Rashid books but not this one. SO much of this book is filled with martial arts stories and contributions by his clinic participants that I became bored and impatient to get through it. After skipping past the above referenced annoyances, there wasn't much left to read about a feel and connection to horses. I wrongly assumed the book would be about Rashid and his journey to softness, told through personal accounts with horses. What it turned out to be mostly about is other

people's journeys and his accounts of softening through martial arts. Some of these accounts, overbearing long.

Mark Rashid writes beautifully. I have learned so much from his stories and insight. His unique understanding of the horse and ability to convey nuance provides an excellent platform for learning. If you care about horses and their welfare, any book by Mark Rashid will contribute to your knowledge bank. It's not a how-to book but you will have a greater understanding of the subtleties in your relationships, both horse and human, after reading this book.

I am such a fan of Mark Rashid and his approach to working with horses! LOVE his books; they are what started me on a path to a kinder, softer way with horses. I had the privilege of participating in one of his clinics a few years ago, as well. This book was an excellent read, and put many things into perspective for me. I "discovered" it at just the right time, too, when I was struggling with many of the concepts he discusses. If you are serious about finding a better way to "be" with horses, both on the ground and in the saddle, then you will definitely enjoy and benefit from this book. Highly recommend all of his other books, as well!

I've been a avid reader of horse and mule books for over 50 years. Mark Rashid is by far the best writer on the subject of relationship building with your equine partner, I have ever read. His insight on the mind of the horse and why it does what it does is brilliant. I have read all of his books and they captivate my attention from the very beginning. I have learned so much about my horses and mules and I continue to be thrilled that he never runs out of relevant material. I can't wait for his next, soon to be released, masterpiece. I highly recommend his books to anyone who really wants to understand their equine partner and do what is best for them and yourself in the process.

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