

# Does My Horse Like Me?

*A Think Like Tink Trail Story*  
Narrated by Tink



Howdy there. It's me, Tink.

Before we make our way down this trail, I want to tell you something I think is important.

Sometimes the same questions we ask about horses... are questions we might be asking about ourselves.

For example, I have found that one of the most common questions horse-loving humans ask is this:

**Does my horse like me?**

It might sound like a simple question. But it's actually a very big one. Because when someone asks that about a horse, they're often asking

something else too:

*Do I matter to you?*

*Do you see me?*

*Am I doing this right?*

And if you've ever wondered those things about a friend... or a group... or someone you really hoped would understand you, you're not alone.

Horses don't use words the way humans do, but we feel things very clearly.

We feel the space around someone. We feel when someone is calm. And we feel when someone is trying very hard... but feeling unsure inside. In fact, we horses are actually very good at noticing feelings humans think they are hiding. Just between us... humans aren't nearly as sly as they believe...

Sometimes we step closer.

Sometimes we step away.

And here's something I want you to remember as we walk through this interesting little story together:

Just because someone steps away... doesn't always mean they don't like you.

Sometimes it means they're thinking. Sometimes it means they're overwhelmed. Sometimes it means they don't feel safe yet. Sometimes it means they need a little space to decide what they feel.

People do that too, even if they don't mean to.

The story I want to share with you happened a long time ago, and it's about a horse named **Geronimo**.

He looked a little like me.



He was what people call a *Leopard Appaloosa*, I mean he looked like a giant Dalmatian dog waiting for a firetruck; spotted and thoughtful, only older, with more life tucked into the corners of his eyes. He tried to hide it sometimes, but it was there.

And the human who met him thought he understood horses pretty well.

His name was **Sam**.

Sam cared deeply about horses. He had worked with a few before. He had watched and learned and believed he knew how horses should behave when a human showed up with kindness and good intentions.

But Geronimo had a different story to tell.

And at first... neither of them knew how to listen.



## When They First Met

Geronimo came to live on a farm where people believed horses could help humans heal.

It was a peaceful place.

The kind of place where the mornings felt slow and the afternoons were warm with sunlight that seemed to settle gently across the fields.

There were open pastures, quiet corners beneath tall trees, and the soft sounds of barn life; footsteps in straw, a gate closing somewhere, the quiet nickering of horses resting in the shade.

The barn was a special place. Families and children sometimes came there when life had been a little confusing, or a little heavy on their hearts. They came because being near horses has a way of helping people breathe a little deeper and feel a little stronger inside.

Geronimo was already an older horse by the time he arrived.

No one was quite sure how old he was, and no one rode him while he lived there. His days as a riding horse had come and gone long before

he arrived at that farm.

But even though he was older, his eyes were bright and curious. They were the eyes of a wise horse that watched first and decided later. It was almost as if Geronimo was always studying the world around him, half sure and half unsure at the same time.

When Sam first met him, he believed in something right away, he believed in his way of doing things. He felt sure that if he was patient and kind, Geronimo would understand what he was asking.

That seemed reasonable.

But horses don't always understand things the way humans expect them to.

You see, humans like to reason things out, think them through like making a plan. "If I do this, then that should happen."

But we horses don't quite think that way. We **associate**, connecting things like a puzzle.

We connect feelings to moments. We remember how something *felt*, even if the moment looks exactly the same on another day.

Because feelings last longer than things.

And no two horses connect and associate the same way.

No two people do either.

At first, the relationship between Geronimo and Sam was... awkward. Not unfriendly. But not comfortable either.

Sam tried to guide Geronimo the way he had guided other horses before.

He used the same body language. The same expectations. The same ideas about what should happen next.

But Geronimo didn't respond the way Sam thought he would.

Sometimes he hesitated.

Sometimes he looked unsure.

Sometimes he simply walked away as if to say, *I hear you... but I don't understand you yet.*

Sam began to feel confused.

He wondered if Geronimo was stubborn. Or distant. Or maybe even a little unfriendly.

But the truth was much simpler.

Geronimo wasn't stubborn. He wasn't distant. And he certainly wasn't unfriendly. Geronimo was simply trying to understand.

And sometimes, when horses are trying to understand something... well hey, we need a little space, you know, and a little time to think.



# The Day Everything Changed

One day, something happened that changed everything.

Sam walked toward Geronimo the same way he had many times before.

The pasture was quiet.

The grass moved in small waves across the field.

Somewhere, two birds were arguing about something that seemed very important to birds.

Geronimo lifted his head from grazing and looked at Sam. For a moment he stood still. Then he turned away. Not in anger. Not in fear. Just... turned away.

Sam noticed this and suddenly paused, then stopped, almost like he could feel the space between them, almost like the space between them was much shorter than it appeared.

In that moment, he felt something stir quietly inside him—that strange hollow feeling people get when they're not sure where they stand.

For the first time, Sam wondered something he hadn't admitted before.  
*Maybe this horse doesn't like me.*

That feeling can be hard.

Most people have felt it at least once.

Maybe you walked up to a group and didn't feel invited in.

Maybe you tried to make a friend and weren't sure how it went.

Maybe you wondered if you said the wrong thing. Or did the wrong thing. Or maybe... you just wondered if you belonged.

When that happens, it's easy to believe the answer must be about you.

But sometimes it isn't.

Sometimes the other person, or horse, is still figuring out their own feelings. Sometimes they just need a little space. A little time.

Humans don't always like to admit when something hurts their heart.

Sometimes they pretend it doesn't hurt.

Sometimes they get frustrated.

Sometimes they try harder.

But when you try harder with a horse who already feels pressure... it can feel like a storm cloud moving closer.

And here is where something interesting happened. Instead of stepping forward again... Sam stepped back.

He didn't ask anything. He didn't insist. He simply stood there.

He took a breath. He relaxed. And he waited.

For the first time since they had met, there was no pressure in the air between them.

Just quiet. Just space. Geronimo noticed, because it felt like a window opening to let in the sunlight. We horses always notice when space appears, we call it our cushion because it feels comfortable and safe.

After a moment, Geronimo turned to look over his shoulder.

Sam hadn't moved closer.

He hadn't pushed.

He hadn't demanded anything.

So Geronimo did something surprising. He took a step forward.

Just one.



It was a small step.

But it meant something very important. For the first time, Geronimo wasn't responding to pressure. He was responding to the **absence of it**.

## **What Geronimo Was Trying to Say**

That small moment changed the way Sam began to see everything.

He realized something he hadn't noticed before. Geronimo wasn't reacting to what he was doing. Geronimo was reacting to what he was **feeling**.

Horses are very good at noticing feelings.

Even the quiet ones.

Especially the quiet ones.

Sam had been focused on results. He believed that if he did the right things, Geronimo would respond the right way.

But Geronimo wasn't reading his actions.

Geronimo was reading his **intentions**.

Because intentions live in the emotional space around us. They create their own kind of environment.

Once Sam realized this, something changed.

He slowed down.

He asked less.

He listened more.

And little by little... Geronimo began to step closer. Not because he had to. But because he **wanted to**. The absence of expectations became an invitation to get to know one another.

## **The Horse Geronimo Became**

Over time, Geronimo became something very special at that farm.

Families and children who were facing difficult moments in their lives often spent time with him.

Geronimo didn't ask anything from them.

He simply stood quietly nearby, providing a cushion of safe space. Sometimes he enjoyed being brushed. Sometimes he leaned into a scratch. Sometimes he just stood there chewing thoughtfully. (He loved eating. If you ever meet a horse, you'll discover that it is a very serious hobby of ours.)

Geronimo had a calm presence that made people feel safe, and we all like to be around others who make us feel that way, and others like being around us when we do that for them. Because sometimes that was exactly what people needed, an invitation of kindness.

As for Sam, who had once wondered if Geronimo liked him, he began to realize something important. Their relationship had changed not because he had learned how to control the horse better. But because he had learned how to **listen**.

Geronimo had helped him see something he hadn't noticed before:

Sometimes the strongest relationships begin the moment we stop trying so hard to force them into shape.

Sam discovered that when he hoped to be understood... it helped to first be understanding.

## **The Last Lesson**

Geronimo didn't stay forever.

Horses, like people, travel their own paths through life.

One day Sam received a phone call.

Geronimo had become very sick, and there was nothing anyone could do.

Sam was standing outside a small store when he heard the news.

And he cried.

Not quietly.

Not politely.

He cried the way people do when someone has left a place in their heart that will never quite be filled the same way again.

Because that's what Geronimo had become. A friend. A teacher. Geronimo had helped Sam see horses—and himself—more clearly. He had taught him that listening matters more than proving something. That understanding someone else often begins the moment we stop trying to control how the story should go.

And maybe the most important lesson of all...

Geronimo had shown Sam that sometimes the most powerful friendships begin with something very small.

A pause.

A smile.

A little space.

And one quiet step closer at a time.

## **The Answer to the Question**

So...

did Geronimo like Sam?

Maybe that's not quite the right question.

Horses don't decide things the same way humans do.

What horses decide is something a little different.

They decide whether it feels safe to be close.

Geronimo chose to step closer.

And sometimes... that's the most honest answer a horse can give, and the most honest answer a friend can give, too.

## Trail Pause — Tink's Thought



Hi again. It's still me, Tink.

Stories about horses sometimes feel like they're about the horse.

But if you listen carefully... they're often about something else.

They're about patience. About learning to see someone the way they really are. They're about discovering that sometimes the strongest friendships begin when someone is brave enough to slow down.

Geronimo taught Sam that.

And maybe, just maybe, he can help you notice something in your own story too.

Because the truth is... Every horse you meet might have something to teach you.

And every person you meet might be learning how to listen, just like Sam did.

Just like you might be too.

**Now here's something I'd love to wonder about with you:**

- Have you ever stepped away from someone, even if you cared about them? Why?
- What do you think changed when Sam stepped back instead of stepping forward?
- What is the difference between trying harder and listening better?
- What does *feeling safe* mean to you?

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